

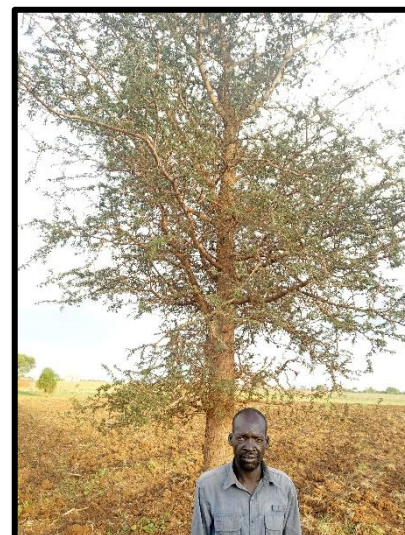
Discover Newsletter for colleagues in Africa

Dear Friends and colleagues,
Many thanks for the many comments I received on agroforestry.



Agroforestry in Kramoja, Uganda

Robert Okuda is an agriculturalist in Karamoja, a very dry region of northern Uganda. Robert speaks highly of the *Faidherbia albida* tree which found along most of the seasonal rivers in Karamoja. Robert says, “people rarely fail to have a good harvest if the crops are grown under this good tree. This tree provides a good microclimate for their crops. It fixes nitrogen in the soil, it gives shade in the dry season, sheds its leaves during the rainy season, and has many other advantages. Picture right.



Picture left: *Faidherbia albida* in Malawi where it is widely used. This farm would benefit from having more of them.



Damage due to storms

Rehema Namyalo in Buganda Region, Central Uganda, says that in recent storms banana plants suffered badly, but those that were growing under trees were not damaged. On farms that have trees, the ground is covered with biomass because of the trees shedding their leaves. Drought does not affect such farms because the ground remains moist. Agroforestry trees provides fodder for livestock, which gives a wonderful synergy between livestock, plants and trees. Trees give habitat for other living organisms like birds and insects, which enhance the ecosystem.



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Comments from Guloba Mereth, Makabuli Yusuf and Robert Bwambale

Guloba Mereth in eastern Uganda, writes, "what I know is that bananas and coffee thrive if intercropped with fig, mango, grevillea, markhamia, *Cordia africana*, *Spathodia sp.*, and *Syzygium jambolanum*. Then every season we intercrop with beans. Next to the trees, we grow all types of creeping yams, nuts and passion fruits. Also, we grow non-creeping yams. We also grow guava, orange, lemon and jackfruit trees. Crops also do well under mvule.

Robert Bwambale in western Uganda, writes, "Nobody in my community has land without at least one tree on his or her land. Most farmers practice agroforestry and have trees that provide fruits, medicine and also increase soil fertility. What I have seen with my own eyes is that such plots of land never suffer heavy soil erosion, in contrast to land that has only one crop.

Makabuli Yusuf, also in eastern Uganda, writes, "You can also add more, such as albizia, African mahogany, Ficus, East African teak, musizi, *Prunus africana*, and many more depending on the demand and usefulness. Agroforestry means to utilise many levels, tubers in the earth, creeping and climbing plants on the surface, also vegetables, and bushes and trees higher up."

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Benefits of Agroforestry

Eric in Kaliro District says, Agroforestry is “Asset-based Community-driven Development (ABCD)”. This means, food security, fodder security and the environmental conservation. Eric promotes this with “farmer family learning groups”. These are farmers who come together to work and learn from each other. A group can be one household or several households. A group may have between 5 and 15 members. He also says it is also necessary to teach religious leaders, cultural leaders, older schoolchildren in primary and secondary schools and local councillors (in Uganda at LC111 level).

Eric provided this summary of the benefits of agroforestry below.

A) Environmental benefits

- a) Reduction of pressure on natural forests.
- b) More efficient recycling of nutrients by deep rooted trees on the site.
- c) Better protection of ecological systems.
- d) Reduction of surface run-off, nutrient leaching and soil erosion because of tree roots and stems.
- e) Improvement of the microclimate, such as lowering of soil surface temperature and reduction of evaporation from the soil because of mulch, ground cover and shade.
- f) Increased soil nutrients and improved soil structure because of the decomposition of fallen leaves.

B) Economic benefits

- a) Increased outputs of food, fuelwood, fodder, fertiliser and timber.
- b) Reduction in the incidence of total crop failure, which often occurs with a single crop or monoculture.
- c) Higher farm income due to increased productivity.

C) Social benefits

- a) Improved rural living standards.
- b) Improved nutrition and health due to increased quality and diversity of foods.
- c) Communities become more settled because people do not need to move to new sites.
- d) Reduction in gender-based violence because firewood is available near to home.

Best wishes, and I wish you success with your agroforestry farming!

Keith Lindsey