THE PREVALENCE, FARMER VALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT TRAITS OF *Garcinia kola* IN THE RAINFOREST OF SOUTH EASTERN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Between 1993 and 1994, farmers in the rainforest zone of southeastern Nigeria were interviewed using structured and semi-structured questionnaires. The aim was to determine farmers' perception of the prevalence, uses, economic value and traits for improvement of *Garcinia kola*. Between 0 and 76% of respondents in different states within the zone owned *G. kola* trees. Number of farmers who owned *G. kola* trees tended to decrease from the south to the north of the zone. Most farmers owned only one *G. kola* and this was usually located in the Food crops plot (38.2%) or home garden (27%). Farmers valued *G. kola* trees for their medicinal uses (41.8%), food/ social value (31.7%), fuelwood (10%) and cash value (8.4%). Major management practices included weeding around the tree and manure application. Under such management practices trees yielded 6 to 15 kg/tree/yr. To design a sustainable improvement programme for *G. kola*, issues of farmers' preferences, techniques for rapid mass seedling production, elucidation of phytochemistry/pharmacology of *G. kola* drugs, determination of optimum tree densities compatible with food crops and tree crops, and techniques for sustainable exploitation of *G. kola* must be addressed. The food crops plot is suggested as the best farm niche in which to execute the conservation programme for *G. kola*.

Keywords: *Garcinia kola* , farmer valuation, prevalence, improvement traits, rainforest.