
ORGANIC FARMING NEUTRALIZES THE ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE CAUSED BY CONVENTIONAL FARMING

Babirye Kevin is a program assistant at Gifende investments limited located in Luwero District Kiwogozi behind the Town council; she holds a diploma in sustainable agriculture and extension from Ndejje University. Gifende investments limited deals in organic fertilizers, and the production of fruits like mangoes, oranges, sour soup, and avocados.

According to Kevin, there is a lot of destruction of the environment through the continuous use of inorganic pesticides and fertilizers; accordingly, overuse of inorganic fertilizers has caused soil, air, and water pollution through nutrient leaching, destruction of soil physical characteristics, accumulation of toxic chemicals in water bodies, as well as causing severe environmental problems and loss of biodiversity. Thus, agrochemicals are among the considerable and dominant factors of pollution in our communities and play a hazardous role in human and livestock health.

Kevin argues that a healthy crop production process surrounds every farmer; the raw materials for making the organic inputs are locally available to any farmer's premises. As Gifende we chose to go organic in our production and we support farmers who are doing organic production all over the country.

The making of organic fertilizers

Gifende uses organic manures like charcoal waste, wood ash, cow dung, egg shells, and *Tithonia*. Wood ash can help in neutralizing soil acidity. Egg shells are a rich source of calcium and other essential nutrients that plants need; egg shells are dried, mixed with wood ash and other decomposed manure, packed in bags of 10kg, 25kg, and supplied to organic farmers in different parts of the country. They also, make the foliar liquid fertilizer and the pesticide that is applied after growth, this is from *Tithonia*.

Procedure for using *Tithonia*:

Fill to half a 50-gallon drum with fresh, chopped *Tithonia* leaves and stems (soft, new growth); fill to level with water; cover, place weight to hold material in the water; allow to ferment for 21 days or until it gets some weird smelling, ash can be added and pepper to increase on the effectiveness, and then this is packed in 1litre bottles, 5 liters, 10 litres and 20 litres that are supplied to farmers. The usage is 1 one liter to 5 litres of water and it effectively works, says Kevin.



NB: *"Depending on the rains, the treatment may be effective for about 1 month. With heavy rains, it is best to treat crops more frequently," said Kevin*

Achievements:

The community that uses the products credits us and this has enlarged our market base; also the effectiveness of the product has also given the company morale to continue doing more research to get more organic fertilizers and pesticides.

Left: Kevin exhibiting the organic products

Challenges

Some farmers have failed/refused to adapt to organic production.

Recommendations

Let's all go organic, the environment is at risk because of what we use. Use of synthetic fertilizers pollutes the environment and also goes into the waters affecting aquatic life. Let everyone embrace the use of inorganics as the production is high and the materials used are locally available making it cheaper than the synthetic fertilizers, she says.

For more information, contact:

Babirye Kevin

Telephone: +256784613724

*Compiled by Andrew Munyole, Uganda Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (UFAAS)
under the CAADPXP4 Project funded through the African Forum for Agricultural Advisory
Services (AFAAS)*