

Kilifi

In Kilifi County Mango forms part of the landscape and they have been in existence for many decades. The economy of the county is based on mangoes, cashew nut and cocoa nut. Most farmers here grow the three trees as a basis for subsistence of which the highest income return comes from cocoa nut, cashew nut and mangoes due to their flowering and fruiting pattern (Figure 40). Cocoa nuts flowers every three months whilst cashew and mangoes flower twice in a year. Flowering of both mangoes and cashew nuts are sometimes severely affected by diseases but only a few farmers invest on IPM. Also, during the harvesting season mango fruits are affected by pests and blemishes when falling and on transportation such that only 50% of the produce reaches the market in good condition. Only a few farmers grow mangoes on commercial scale of 50 to over 2000 trees. Even within those farms trees are hardly weeded, pruned and sprayed with fungicides and pesticides. Most mango trees planted in Kilifi are from seedlings rather than grafted, which gives intra-varietals and intra-specific diversity. The varieties of mangoes grown in Kilifi are many. They include Ngowe, Apple, Boribo, Kitovu, Batawi, Kent, Mpunda, Dodo, Dodomaji, Kimuzi (Chimuzi), Khovu, Safula, Mcharabu, Mteri and many unnamed local varieties.

Of these varieties Ngowe and apple are the most marketable. Ngowe ripens early thus it captures the early market while Apple is known for its sweetness. Kitovu is another variety with a wider acceptability since it is the one eaten unripe with salt and pepper giving it good aroma and taste. The cost of farming Ngowe, Apple and Batawi are the highest since the first is highly susceptible to powdery mildew; Batawi and Apple are highly susceptible to mango weevil and fruit fly, in addition to rust that affects Apple depending on weather conditions. Batawi has a good taste but it is hardly harvested in good condition due to high susceptibility to maggots of the fruit fly.

Kilifi and Coast in general will be the most suitable centre of diversity for mango selection and improvement given the wide diversity observed on farms (Fig. 41).



Fig. 40: Typical mango production system in Kilifi Fig.41:A variety of mango with extra large glossy fruits