

# Potential impact of urban agriculture on the environment : a case study of Kasarani Division, Nairobi

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## **Abstract:**

This study aimed at finding out the relationship between urban agriculture and the environment. Urban agriculture in Kenya has taken place since 1899 with the first comprehensive study taking place in Nairobi in 1987 by Mazingira Institute. Urban agriculture has continued to evolve and more studies taking place hence the need for more and new information. Agriculture being the main economic activity in Kenya means that urban agriculture will most likely continue to be practiced and evolve consequently impacting on the different environment. This paper therefore aims at identifying the practice of urban agriculture, why agriculture is carried out and the general impact of the practice on the environment. Using Kasarani division as a case study, primary and secondary data collection methods were used to collect information. Both qualitative and quantitative surveys were used in the primary data collection with a pre-set structured questionnaire used in quantitative data collection. Direct observation was used in the qualitative survey. Simple descriptive statistics were used: mean, median, mode and percentages in analyzing data collected from a sample of 96 households. Cross tabulations and chisquare tests were used in testing the hypothesis. The study results showed that cultivation took place on own/family land (52%), along the river/underpowerline/road (30%) and within estates (18%). Urban farming in Kasarani division plays a major role in making the population food secure where majority (75%) of the respondents carried out urban farming for food. Furthermore, any surplus was sold to generate income and the money used in other things such as paying school fees, clothing and investments. It also provides employment, especially among the youth, hence eliminating idleness. Furthermore, most urban farmers utilized Urban waste in carrying out farming hence minimizing pollution. Soil conservation methods such as intercropping, mulching and crop rotation were practiced but mainly by those who have access to own land and extension services. Therefore, urban agriculture can be encouraged and policy developed to ensure safe and sustainable practices of urban farming.