



## The application of organic farming for sustainable fruit production in Kenya

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### ABSTRACT

Organic agriculture is a holistic production and management system which promotes and enhances agro ecosystem health, including biodiversity, biological cycles and soil biodiversity activity. It emphasizes the use of management practices in preference to the use of off-farm inputs, taking into account regional conditions. Organic agriculture uses, where possible, agronomic, biological and mechanical methods, as opposed to using synthetic materials, to fulfill any specific function within the system. Since excessive use of potentially harmful agrochemicals may affect biodiversity, environmental quality, food safety and farmer's health, there is increased interest in more sustainable production systems such as organic farming, with minimum synthetic pesticide and fertilizer use. Benefits of organic farming include preservation of both ground water resources and fragile ecosystems; allowing growers to benefit from special marketing riches and grower-friendly price mechanisms. Consumers are also increasingly avoiding fruits from synthetic chemical fertilizers and pesticides because of the risks involved in health and environment. The horticultural industry in Kenya is the fastest growing agricultural sub-sector



in the country. This progress has come due to considerable investment in production infrastructure at all levels, largely funded by the private sector. This paper reviews the potential of applying organic farming in Kenya especially on farming systems that can be transformed into organic systems easily with tree crop products as an additional source of income and poverty alleviation.

**Key words:** Organic farming, fruit production