

Banana varieties

Banana and plantains are a very important source of livelihood in East and Central Africa contributing to both food and cash needs of the people.

Most bananas used for cooking are East African highland bananas. One most commonly grown variety is mpologoma. It has a good yield and is less susceptible to wind because of its short nature but is susceptible to a number of production constraints including pests and diseases and a low drought resistance. NSH 20 is a high yielding banana hybrid with a good taste and colour when cooked and is resistant to black sigatoka.

Uses of bananas

NSH 42 is used for making juice. It generally gives a big bunch and its juice is sweet with a bright colour.

FIA 17 and 25 are high yielding banana varieties that are multipurpose. They can be cooked, used to make juice or eaten as a snack.

Also important from the East and Central Africa region are plantain varieties. These can be steamed, fried, roasted or used to make plantain chips that are eaten as snacks.

Also used as snack bananas are kamera masenge and gomi shell varieties but these are affected by fusarium wilt and it greatly affects their yield. A cavendish variety called william has been introduced to mitigate the wilt. This gives a very sweet juice and a good beer and even in poor soils, it will give you a good bunch.