# Idle land in dry & hot areas? Go nuts and try Cashew-nut Farming!

The cashew nut tree is an evergreen plant that can thrive in hot climates and is resistant to drought. Not only is the cashew nut itself delicious, but both the fruit and the nut are also rich in vitamins and plant proteins. However, due to its low production and high global demand, cashew nuts can be expensive locally, partly due to the value addition process. Planting cashew nut trees on one acre of land can yield at least 50 trees, and production typically begins around three years after planting. Besides the economic value, cultivating cashew nuts can also help with soil conservation on degraded, sun-exposed lands.

For aspiring cashew nut farmers, it is crucial to plan carefully and gather sufficient information. This includes understanding the population of cashew nut trees in the area, assessing the type of soil, and determining the appropriate spacing for optimal production.

## Farming and production

Before embarking on cashew nut farming, it is essential to plan and acquire adequate information. Proper planning from the beginning ensures a higher chance of success. Digging a 2 by 2 feet hole is sufficient for planting each tree, and a seedling typically costs KSH 150. During the first year, the tree requires careful maintenance and attention. The farmer should ensure that the tree receives neither excess water nor completely dries up, as this affects the development and stability of the roots. After three years, the tree should start yielding, and the yield is expected to increase with each passing year. A cashew nut tree reaches maturity between

6 to 9 years and can remain productive for up to 45 years. In favorable climates, a mature tree can produce around 50 to 60 kilograms of cashew nuts. The tree typically has two productive seasons.