

Hydroponics farming system in Kenya – part 1

The art of planting crop soilless is regarded as the new way of farming across the world and this farming method is known as hydroponics. It has however been in existence for thousands of years dating back to 1600BC.

In the 21st century, hydroponics farming is becoming the method for city dwellers across the world and also in Kenya.

Benefits of hydroponics

The benefits are, use of limited space, it's smart and clean farming since you do not use soil. Hence, you don't need to get dirty when farming, hydroponics saves up to 80% water, there is faster growth in crops because of nutrients they are fed with implying shorter farming cycles.

There is also reduced pests and diseases because of reduced use of soil but in case of infection one is advised to use bio pesticides which are less harmful.

Types of hydroponics

There are two different units, the crop unit and livestock unit. There are various systems that a farmer can adopt. The first system unit is the nutrient film technique (NFT) and this is automated as it needs a pump for pumping water from the storage tank into the crops and can hold 450 crops.

The second system unit under crops is the kitchen garden and it's more suitable for anyone that wants to maximize space in their balcony. This system is watered manually and can hold 300 crops.

Operating the units

The NFT system uses small black pipes to feed water through the plastic cups into the crops. When watering ,hydroponic nutrients are put into the water and they flow when pumped up to the last crop and water is recycled . The unit is good for lettuce, broccoli, cauliflower, spinach and kales.

For the kitchen garden, the system is done manually by hand in terms of water crops daily with a jerrican. The garden is good for strawberries, spinach and kales and accommodates 300 crops.