

Urban and peri-urban forestry in the face of climate change in Cameroon: challenges and new perspectives for sustainability

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THEME: Forests, biodiversity and terrestrial ecosystems - BIOD

KEY WORDS: Urban forestry, sustainable development, urbanization, environmental degradation, management strategies, Cameroon.

ABSTRACT:

Urban forestry is a relatively new, multidisciplinary approach in international forest research. Rapid urbanization and climate change raise several issues for those who are responsible for developing policies and making decisions at local, national and international levels. Urban trees provide a significant contribution to building resilient cities and improving health and well-being, such as through mitigating natural disasters, providing ecosystem services, reducing energy costs or increasing property values. However, urban and peri-urban forest ecosystems in Cameroon are steadily increasingly under pressure from their city populations. This study assessed the status of urban and peri-urban forestry, evaluated the effect of population growth on urban forests landscape and designed innovative strategies that will ensure sustainability and improvement of urban living environment. It was investigated through secondary data, field investigation, enquiries to relevant stakeholders, direct assessment and observations of urban and peri-urban forest landscapes in Cameroon. These analyses highlight the extreme diversity of environmental resources from urban forests in Cameroon. Rapid urban population growth, limited land area, and poor implementation of government policies are some factors affecting urban forests development and are responsible for vicious cycle of environmental degradation in urban areas in Cameroon. The results contribute elements for strategic and operational planning. Urban forestry management is an important strategy to improve urban living and working environments. There is a need to highlight successful strategies and actions concerning the management of urban and peri-urban forests. Involvement of all stakeholders and users in reflections and in the implementation of policies concerning the management of the urban and peri-urban forests should be adopted and advocated, to ensure sustainable development and to ensure that cities, trees and forests grow together to meet the needs of urbanized societies.