

# Cashew project to revive Legon Botanical Gardens

By Victor Kwawukume, ACCRA

A CASHEW plantation has been initiated by the African Cashew initiative (ACI) to revive the University of Ghana Botanical Gardens at Legon.

The project, which is a collaboration among the ACI, the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA) and the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG), form part of efforts to increase cashew yields in Ghana.

The initiative is also intended to increase cashew yield to more than one tonne per hectare compared to the current 300-400 kilogrammes per hectare.

Mr Abu Dadzie, a Research Scientist at the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana, said cashew farming had the potential to enhance the socio-economic growth of the country through employment creation and export to generate foreign exchange.

He said an enhanced plantation of cashew trees would ensure a greener urban and more prosperous rural Ghana and help address youth unemployment.

Mr Dadzie said the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG) had developed improved cashew varieties to increase cashew yields in Ghana

## Training for cashew farmers

The Executive Director of ACI, Ms Rita Weidinger, said since 2009, the ACI, together with its partners, had trained about 60,000 cashew farmers in Ghana.

"As a result, cashew households have more than doubled their income from cashew growing alone. Also, cashew processor, OLAM, in cooperation with CRIG and ACI, distributed 82,000 improved cashew seedlings to increase cashew yields for farmers in the Brong Ahafo Region", she said.

## Reviving Legon Botanical gardens

The Manager of Pine Springs Limited, Mr Kofi Boakye Yiadom, said the University of Ghana gave parts of the 123 acres of Legon Botanical Gardens to Pine Springs Ltd in 2008 to develop a leisure space and to organise sensitisation programmes to the environment and the benefits of nature such as herbal medicine, fresh and cool air and recreation.

The project, he said, was planned for 35 years, which could afterwards be extended for another 15 years.

“As the vegetation in the park is gradually deteriorating, the University of Ghana, Pine Springs Ltd, private companies and individuals volunteered to plant more than 700 trees, beginning from this year.

Among personalities who took part in the planting exercise were the Country Director of the German Development Corporation (GIZ), Mr Siegfried Leffler, Mr Seth Osei-Akoto of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Dr Asirifi - Department of Botany, University of Ghana, Legon, and Mr Nii Apa Ahinakwah of OLAM.

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**“As the vegetation in the park is gradually deteriorating, the University of Ghana, Pine Springs Ltd, private companies and individuals volunteered to plant over 700 trees since the beginning of 2014 until today”.**