



Defeating cancer starts with your farming priorities

BEN IMMANUEL MISAGGA > CANCER

I have observed that one of the trendiest things in today's economy is corporate farming. Several white-collar professionals that have earned enough savings are shifting to farming as part of their retirement planning.

In fact, it is fashionable these days to meet an old friend and the first thing he brags about are the acres of farmland and how lucrative farming is. Amid all this showiness, it is imperative to understand that when you have earned enough to live through a happy retirement, the most important aspect is not how much profits you earn from farming, but how well you are doing it to sustain your health as well as the environment and generations to come.

Have you ever paused to think about growing plants or fruits whose most essential role is to improve your health? Incidentally, our forefathers foresaw this and surrounded their homesteads with all kinds of flora that possesses herbal

ingredients to fight diseases.

That was before cancer became a big threat to our lives. It is for that reason that I set out to tackle it head-on through strategic farming. As of last week, I cleared two acres purposely for growing foods and fruits with cancer-fighting properties. It is in memory of my late sister Lydia Namazi, who recently succumbed to cancer.

Here, I am not looking at success through profits, but by growing plants with the power to fight cancers and other diseases. You may be aware of the fruit nutrients that detoxicate the body or the power of the soursop fruit, popularly known as *ekitaffer*, to produce immunity to cancers.

Last week, I found time to pass by the CBS-Pewosa trade fair at Wankulukuku grounds. The exhibition is renowned for showcasing farming products and techniques, among other things. There was indeed a variety of plants and fruit seedlings to take away, including

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those renowned for fighting cancer such as broccoli, strawberries, carrots and, of course, mangoes.

In this Internet era, where everything is on the fingertips, you do not need to be a medical professional to know these cancer basics as long as you are not going to self-medicate. So, I was taken aback when only one person from the dozens of exhibitors was informed enough to explain the various health benefits of these plants and their resistance to cancer.

To most of the exhibitors and showgoers, the biggest selling points were good yields and profits. Health was a by-the-way. As I pondered after taking away more plant varieties, I also wondered whether fellow Ugandans do really take wellness seriously.

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Easy-to-grow plants such as lemons or mangoes are ignored in preference for 'designer' plants that create shade or beautify the compound. Upon getting unexplainable ailments, they will be forced to buy drugs whose properties are material that can be easily grown at home.

Ugandans, we should prioritise knowledge and health before anything else.

Meanwhile, I am hoping my farming efforts will set up a model farm for others to pick a leaf from. They may also be consuming 'ultra-processed' foods that contain complex ingredients. In fact, recent study by the Guardian (See: Ultra-processed foods may be linked to cancer)

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