# english black

# Package 90, Script 6

April 2010

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**A farmer uses jatropha to protect his young oil palm seedlings from rodents**

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### Notes to broadcaster

Use of the palm is as old as human civilization, dating back to the cultivation of date palm by the Mesopotamians and other Middle Eastern people 5000 years ago or more. Palm belongs to the plant family *Arecaceae*. *Arecaceae’s*economic importance and significance can’t be overemphasized. Coconut products, oils, palm syrup, ivory nuts, carnuba wax, rattan cane, and palm wood are some of the products produced from this family of plants.

Many farmers in Africa grow palm for its many uses. Unfortunately, many farmers risk losing a significant portion of their oil palm seedlings to rodents.

Rodents are mammals, characterized by continuously growing incisors in the upper and lower jaws, which must be kept short by gnawing. They use these sharp incisors to gnaw wood, break into food, and bite predators. Examples of rodents include rats, beavers, guinea pigs, etc.

However, with proper planting techniques, farmers can save their young oil palm trees and seedlings and earn a good living. This script tells us about the innovative idea a farmer learned from his wife. Now he uses jatropha to save his young palm seedlings from being destroyed by rodents.

This script is based on actual interviews. You could use this script as inspiration to research and write a script on a similar topic in your area. Or you might choose to produce this script on your station, using voice actors to represent the speakers. If so, please make sure to tell your audience at the beginning of the program that the voices are those of actors, not the original people involved in the interviews.

**Characters**

Host

Efo Kojo: Farmer and husband of Esi

Wofa Yaw: Efo Kojo’s friend and also a farmer

Esi: Efo Kojo’s wife

**Host:** Hello listeners, welcome to your favourite program on farmer innovations. Today we’ll hear how a wife helps her disappointed husband prevent rodents from cutting down his young oil palm seedlings. Maybe you are facing such challenges too. So stay tuned and learn.

*Fade up signature tune, then under host*

**Host:** In a small farming community in the Eastern Region of Ghana known as Abonse, Efo

Kojo and Wofa Yaw both grow palm. They are looking for better ways to make money with oil palm.

*Sounds of children playing football and other games, with others cheering their favourite players on. Under the village tree which serves as the centre of the town are Efo Kojo and Wofa Yaw.*

**Efo Kojo:** Yaw, have you noticed that the oil palm business is booming?

**Wofa Yaw:** Yeah! A farmer friend who has been in this business told me how much he makes from the sale of his nuts every year. Especially in the lean season when the nuts are scarce and hard to come by.

**Efo Kojo:** If that is the situation, we should also go into it.

**Wofa Yaw:** That’s a brilliant idea. Why don’t we do it?

**Host:** They agreed to go into the oil palm business, to better their lot in life. They acquired land at various locations, cleared it, bought their oil palm seedlings, and established their plantations.

*Sounds of men weeding and singing*

**Host:** Efo Kojo shouts in dismay and puts his two hands on his head.

**Efo Kojo:** Egyei mewu! I am dead.

**Host:** Most of his oil palm seedlings have been cut down by rodents. In dismay, he walks quietly home. Efo Kojo looks so disappointed. He feels his decision to go into oil palm plantations is the worst idea he has ever conceived. In his disappointed mood, he meets Wofa Yaw coming from his farm. The two men greet each other.

**Wofa Yaw:** Aye koo.

**Efo Kojo:** Yaa ye.

**Wofa Yaw:** You look so tired. Was there so much work on the farm today?

**Efo Kojo:** Yes! There was so much weeding.

**Wofa Yaw:** You sound so disturbed – is anything the matter?

**Efo Kojo:** I’m really disturbed and disappointed with my farm.

**Wofa Yaw:** Why?

**Efo Kojo:** Most of my young oil palm seedlings have been cut down by rodents and, you know, it means my whole life savings has been taken away from me! How do I explain it to my wife, who strongly believes this whole idea is a waste of time, money and resources?

**Wofa Yaw:** I’m very sorry. Did you protect the young palm seedlings well enough?

**Efo Kojo:** You know I simply can’t afford this wire mesh to fence off my farm, even though I know that it stops rodents from getting in and cutting down the young trees. That would mean extra cost to me, which you know I can’t afford.

**Wofa Yaw:** But the wire mesh is the best and only option if you want to protect your seedlings.

**Efo Kojo:** I will see if I can do something about it.

**Wofa Yaw:** Try hard and act fast before the rodents finish with the rest.

**Efo Kojo:** Thank you.

**Wofa Yaw:** Bye and greetings to your family.

**Efo Kojo:** I will surely deliver your greetings. Also send mine to your family.

*Footsteps gradually fading out*

**Host:** Efo Kojo got home. After taking his supper, he sat for a while and then retired to bed. He tossed from one end of the bed to the other, until his wife Esi woke him up to ask what was wrong with him.

**Esi:**Efo, wake up, wake up! You are restless – what is the matter?

**Efo Kojo:** Hmmmmm! Hmmmm!! Hmmmmm!!!

**Esi:** What is hmmm, hmmmm?

**Efo Kojo:** I felt so disappointed when I went to the farm to weed today.

**Esi:** What happened?

**Efo Kojo:** Most of the young palm trees have been cut down by rodents. For what reason, I

can’t tell.

**Esi:** I’m so sorry about that, Efo. So, what do we do?

**Efo Kojo:** My friend Wofa Yaw asked me to buy wire mesh and build it around the palm trees. But I can’t afford it.

**Esi:** If we have to do that, then it means Ama, our only daughter, must drop out of school. Which

I will not allow to happen.

**Efo Kojo:** I’m in a fix and don’t know what to do.

**Esi:** Calm your nerves and put yourself to sleep. Hopefully a better idea will come by morning.

*Fade up music for five seconds, then cross-fade into cock crowing*

**Esi:** Good morning, Efo, I hope you slept well.

**Efo Kojo:** Yes, I did.

**Esi:** I have an idea. Have you noticed that the jatropha plants on the farm have never been cut down by rodents? And its seeds have never been eaten by rodents since I started picking them up for sale.

**Efo Kojo:** Yes.

**Esi:** Do you know the jatropha man – the one who tells us all about the benefits of jatropha and processes jatropha seeds into oil?

**Efo Kojo:** Yes.

**Esi:** Well, he told me that jatropha plants and seeds repel rodents.

**Efo Kojo:** Really?

**Esi:** Yes! This is very true. Also, jatropha seeds can be used to make biodiesel. So, if we plant jatropha around the palm seedlings, we will make money out of it and at the same time protect the palm seedlings.

**Efo Kojo:** But how do we get the jatropha seedlings?

**Esi:** We have a lot on the farm already. They are easy to establish. They grow faster than you think. And here’s something else. Jatropha repels rodents when they feed on it. It calms their nerves and dazes them for a very long time – which makes them vulnerable and easy for us to catch.

**Efo Kojo:** Yes my dear, we can either sell or use them for a delicacy, which saves us some

money on animal protein.

**Esi:** You are very right, Efo.

**Efo Kojo:** A quick question, Esi, before you start on the house chores. What about labour? How can we plant these jatropha plants around the palm seedlings?

**Esi:** You, I and the children will do that, since we do not have enough money to hire labourers.

**Host:** Esi excuses her husband, Efo Kojo. Feeling relieved and happy, he nods his head, picks

up his cutlass and heads towards the farm.

*Sounds of people weeding, digging and singing, then fade and hold under host*

**Host:** It took less than a week for Efo Kojo and his family to plant jatropha around his palm trees. A month later, Efo Kojo meets his friend Wofa Yaw and tells him his story and innovation. Wofa Yaw is curious about his friend’s new discovery and visits Efo Kojo’s farm. He realizes that the palm trees are indeed growing and the rodents have stopped cutting them down.

**Wofa Yaw:** Bro! That is a very good job you have done here.

**Efo Kojo:** You must thank Esi for her innovative idea which has saved me so much money.

**Wofa Yaw:** Indeed, it’s a very practical thing to do. I’m adopting it right away so I can save some money too.

*Fade out sounds and fade up signature tune, then under host*

**Host:** Welcome back, listeners. We heard how a farmer and his wife were able to use jatropha plants to prevent rodents from cutting down young palm seedlings and improve their lives and the lives of their family.

Thank you listeners. I hope and believe we shall all share this information with others so we can improve and make money in every farming activity we do.

It is good bye for now. Make time again next week to listen to another innovation from a farmer. This has been your regular host, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

*Fade up signature tune, then out*

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## Information sources

W. H. Barreveld, 1993. *Date palm products*. FAO Agricultural Services Bulletin #101. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/t0681E/t0681e00.htm#conW>

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