

Abstract

Urban green areas not only provide aesthetic qualities but also provide important ecosystem services in ever-shrinking habitats, and therefore need sustainable management practices. The western and northwestern parts of Nairobi are within an upland dry forest that stretched from Karura to Ngong forests with a characteristic vegetation composition. Much of that vegetation has been replaced by exotic species and, over time, the original indigenous tree species composition may be lost. No previous studies have profiled the local vegetation structure in Kenya and then used this knowledge to restore the urban green environment. We carried out studies in Karura and Ngong forests and used 16 carefully selected species to recreate a natural forest using the 'Miyawaki method' at the College of Biological and Physical Sciences of the University of Nairobi. In just 16 months the species have established extremely well, with the best performing species (*Ehretia cymosa*) growing to more than 210 cm from just about 43 cm. We expect to recreate a quasi-natural forest and use such studies and methods to restore urban green environments in Kenya.