

Northwestern University study looks at answers to climate change

Breadfruit: Potential food of the future

Climate models suggest breadfruit trees will grow well across the tropics for many decades to come. There is an especially big opportunity in tropical Africa, where large areas are suitable for growing breadfruit trees. This means that planting more breadfruit trees could help make food supplies more stable as the planet warms.

Lucy Yang, at Northwestern University in Illinois, explains how the starchy fruits can be cooked in many ways and also turned into a flour. “They are highly productive and extremely nutritious,” she says. “In addition, once a tree is established it is quite resilient.”

For this study, Yang and Daniel Horton, also at Northwestern, worked with Nyree Zerega at Chicago Botanic Garden. Climate models were used to identify opportunities and solutions. The researchers first looked at where in the tropics breadfruit grows now and identified the climatic conditions cultivated trees require. Next, they used climate models to look at where breadfruit could still be grown between 2060 and 2080. They found the crop will be relatively unaffected, with the overall suitable area shrinking by just 4 per cent globally.

Source: news scientist.com