



Million Belay, PhD



Why Agroecologically Produced Food is a Medicine

People often say that agroecology-grown food is "food as medicine" because it takes a whole-person approach to farming that focuses on biodiversity, soil health, and using few chemicals to grow crops that are high in nutrients. By not using synthetic pesticides and fertilizers, this method lowers the amount of harmful residues that people are exposed to, which is linked to chronic illnesses. The variety in agroecological practices encourages a wide range of diets, which are important for good health and avoiding illness. These environmentally friendly methods not only make sure that healthy food is made, but they also help keep the ecosystem healthy, which leads to healthier food choices.

Moreover, agroecology frequently uses traditional and indigenous knowledge. This includes adding nutrient-dense native plants and heirloom types to the diet, which has its own health benefits. Agroecology-grown foods are usually less processed, which is in line with dietary advice that says you should eat whole, barely processed foods for best health. Agroecology is also resistant to climate change, which means it can be used to create a sustainable food system that can still provide healthy food even when environmental problems arise. Agroecology's ideas about growing clean, varied, and nutrient-dense foods directly support the idea of "food as medicine," which shows how important food choices are for staying healthy and avoiding illness.

Speaker Bio: Million Belay, PhD

Million Belay is the coordinator of the Alliance for Food Sovereignty for Africa, a network of major African networks. He is a member of the International Panel of Experts on Food System Sustainability (IPES-Food). Million is the founder of MELCA - Ethiopia, an indigenous NGO. Million has spent the last two decades working on issues such as intergenerational learning of bio-cultural diversity, agroecology, local communities' right to seed and food sovereignty, and forest issues. His focus is now on food sovereignty, agroecology, food system transformation. He holds a PhD in environmental learning, a MSc in tourism and conservation, and a BSc in biology.