

Leafy Greens and Vegetables in Solomon Islands



*Practical ways
of growing local
food plants, and
doing it well*
by B. Reg French

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A Project of the Rotary Club of Devonport
North, District 9830, District 9600
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Leafy Greens and Vegetables in Solomon Islands

This is one of a series of publications produced for the Learn♦Grow™ Solomon Islands project.

Other publications in the series are:

Food Plants of Solomon Islands – A Compendium (published July 2010). A large reference text with comprehensive scientific and technical information on all food plants of Solomon Islands.

Food Crops of Solomon Islands – A Brief Introduction to the Crops (to be published). A book on the growing practices and food value of crops of potential in Solomon Islands.

Two other field guides in this series are:

Good Gardening and Growing Root Crops in Solomon Islands (published July 2010).

Fruit and Nuts in Solomon Islands (to be published)

All publications will be made available as pdf books on the Learn♦Grow™ website (www.learnngrow.org) and the Food Plants International website (www.foodplantsinternational.com)

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Leafy Greens and Vegetables in Solomon Islands

*Practical ways of growing local food plants,
and doing it well*

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Other publications in this series

**Good Gardening and Growing Root Crops
in Solomon Islands**

Fruit and Nuts in Solomon Islands

Solomon Islands

land of beautiful leafy vegetables



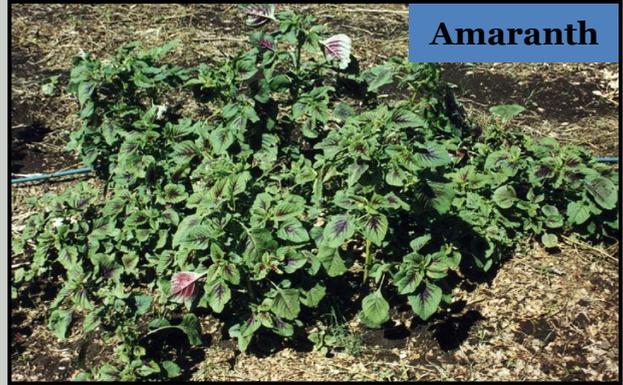
Leafy greens

the health foods of the nation

Slippery kebis



Amaranth



Kangkong



Fig leaf



Using leafy greens

Collect and cook a mixture of leaves



Many edible leafy greens grow around houses and along roadsides



Green leafy vegetables should be cooked



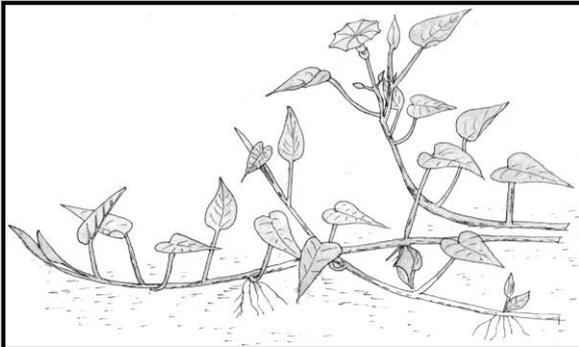
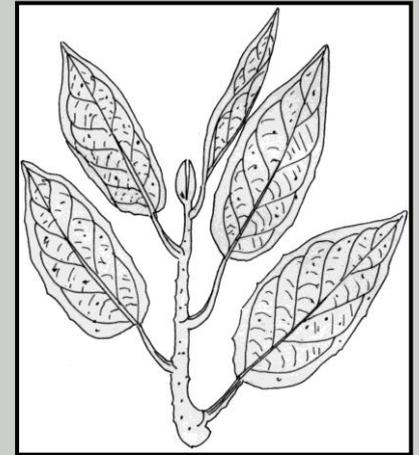
Healthy food



Healthy people ...



- **Eat a fish tin full of dark green tropical leaves each day**
- **Make sure children get them**
- **Limit foods like ball head and headed Chinese cabbage**

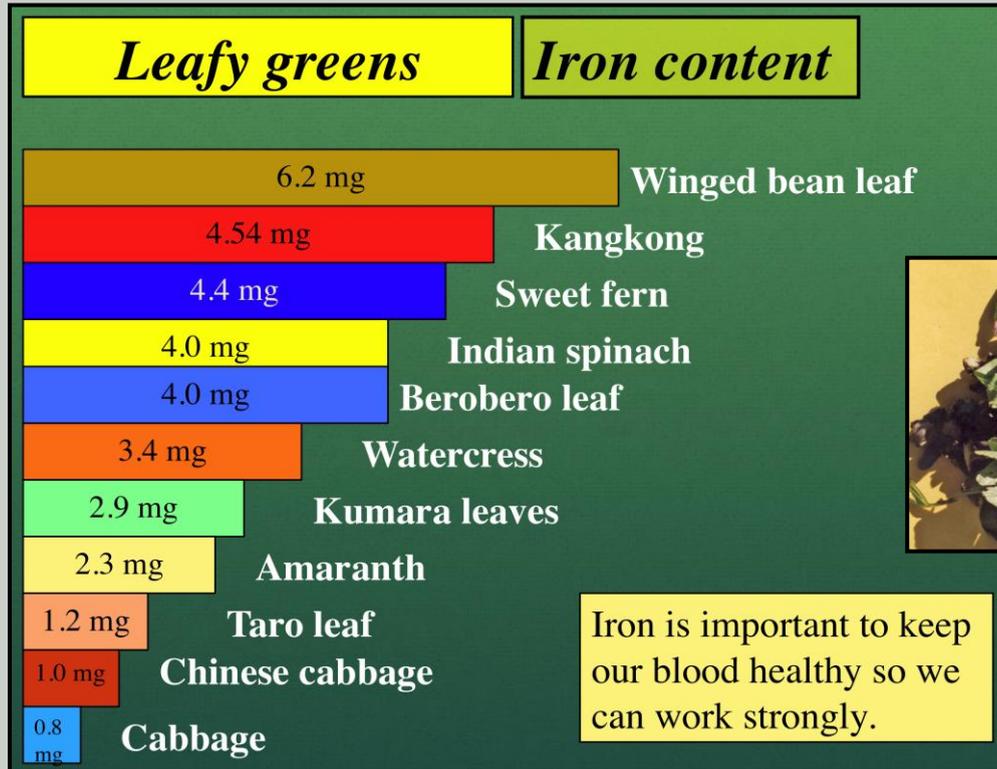


There is an amazing collection of very attractive, dark green, highly nutritious tropical leafy vegetables.

Edible leafy greens

- **Many plants have edible leaves**
- **Edible leaves are nutritious**
- **Normally, all leaves should be cooked to kill bacteria**
- **Everybody should eat a fish tin of dark green tropical leaves every day to stay healthy**
- **Some leafy greens can be grown as hedges, in swamps, on coral soils and around houses to provide a regular daily supply of leafy vegetables**

Green leafy vegetables - Iron content

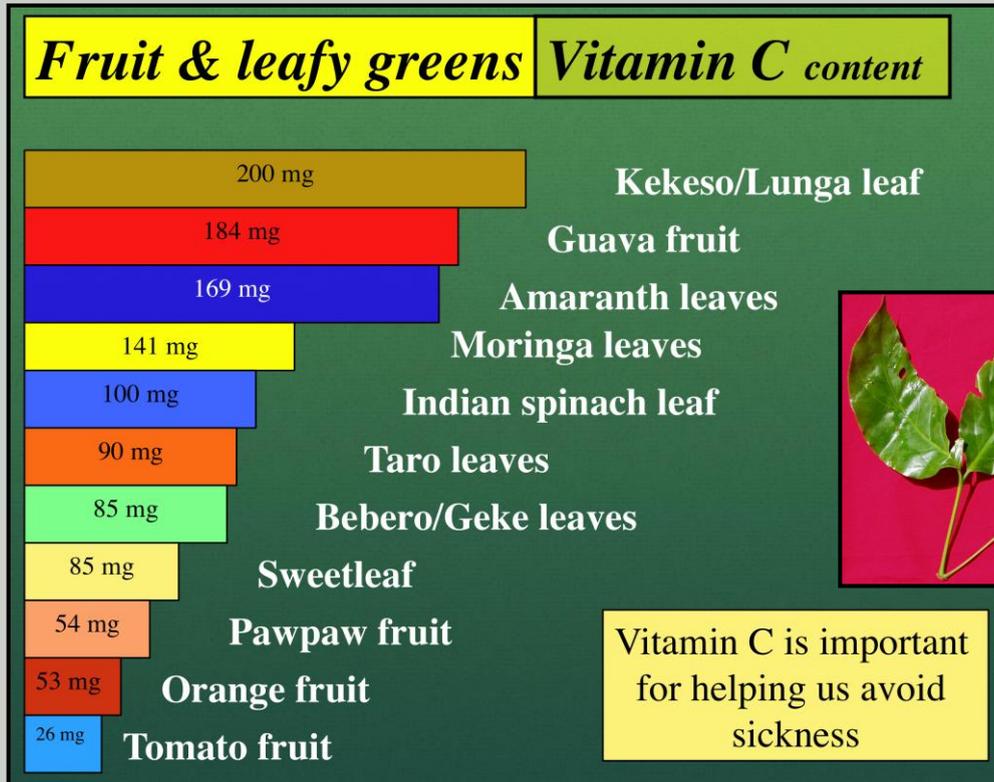


**Winged
bean leaves**



Iron is important to keep our blood healthy so we can work strongly.

Vitamin C for good health

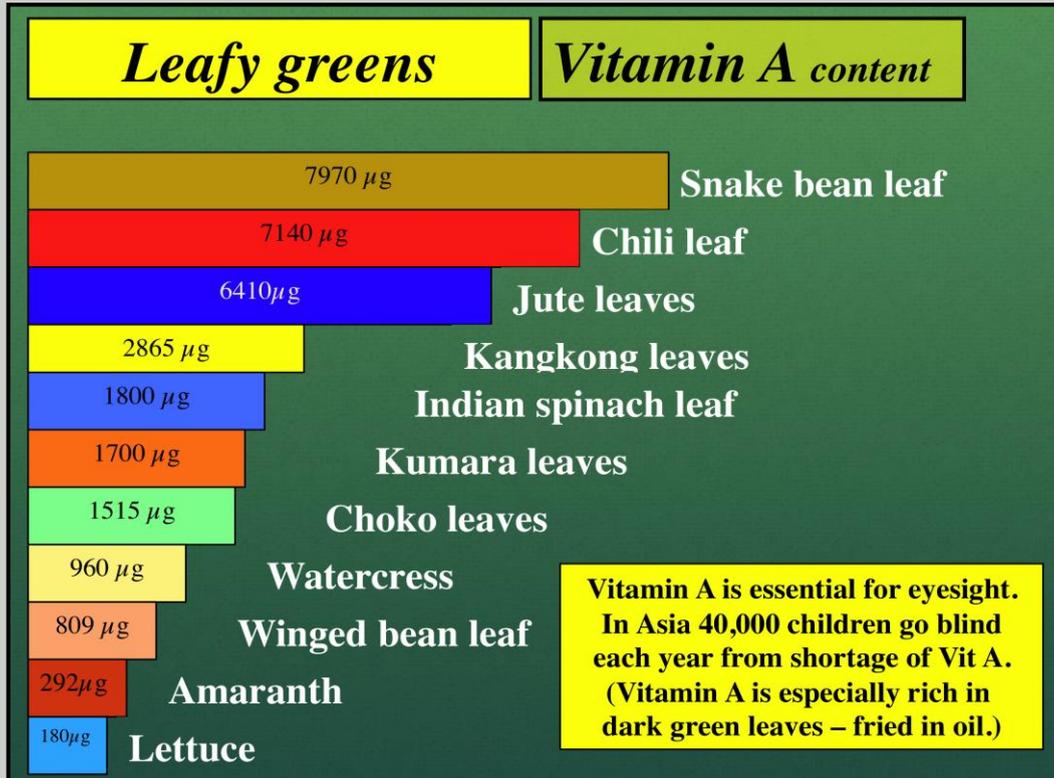


Kekeso/lunga



Vitamin C is important for helping us avoid sickness

Food value of leaves



Snake bean



Slippery cabbage - a delicious, highly nutritious leaf

Fry or steam it to avoid it going slimy



Lema

Weko

Neka

Gnahi

Lope



Abelmoschus manihot



Paura

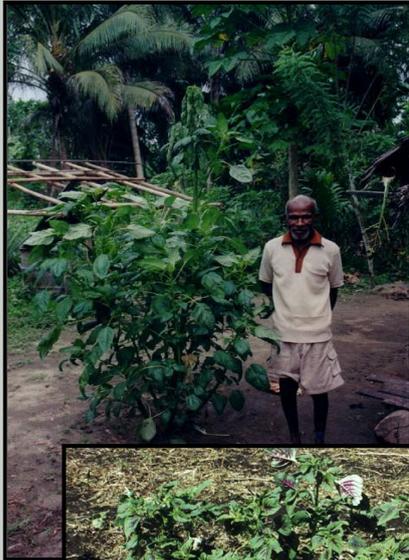
Nyahi

Baera

Nibi

Amaranth - a quick growing green

A home garden favourite



**Scattering
seeds in old
fire ashes
helps plants
grow well.**



Amaranthus spp



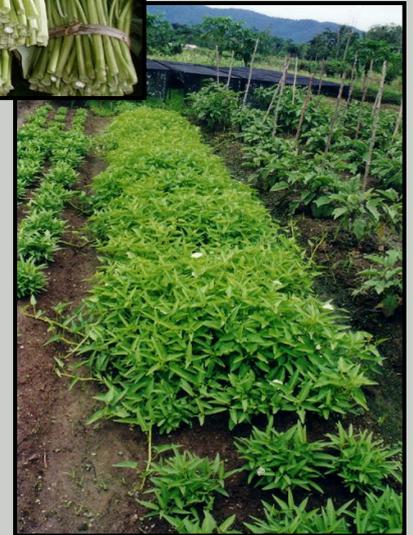
Kangkong - a coastal treat

Varieties for swamps and dryland



**A nutritious
leaf that grows
easily.**

Ipomoea aquatica



Nightshade - the first green to grow

Despite European myths, this is a major tropical leafy green vegetable that grows worldwide.



Blackberryed nightshade
Solanum nigrum

Blackberryed nightshade grows quickly. The leaves and fruit are cooked and eaten.



Fig leaves - great texture and flavour

Mostly small shrubs and trees



Kanava

Nyia nwatu

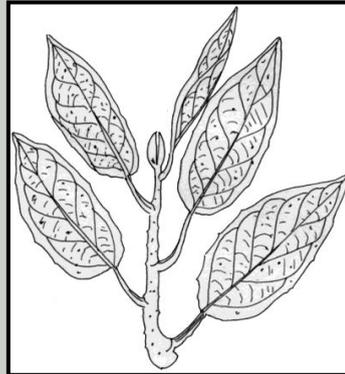
Thakwari

Many figs
have edible
leaves and
fruit.

Mangako

Sakwari

Amosi



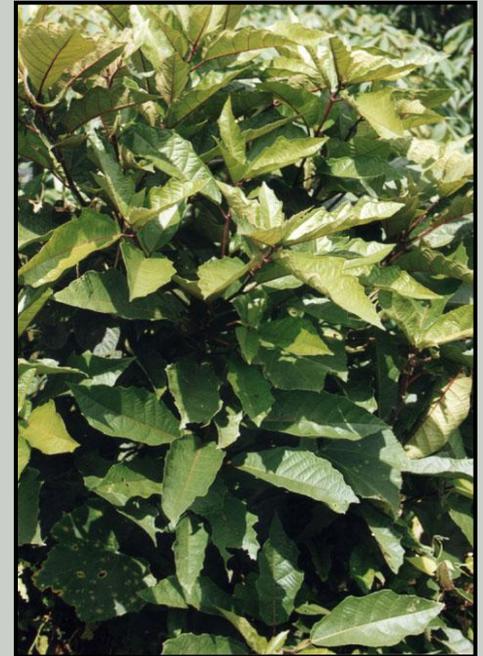
Kamau

Pinopoto

Namau

Bakua

Mokau



Ficus copiosa and
Ficus wassa

Suga/Lenge - a sweet, tender green

Kekoso

Lengo

Nyia nwasoli

Poke

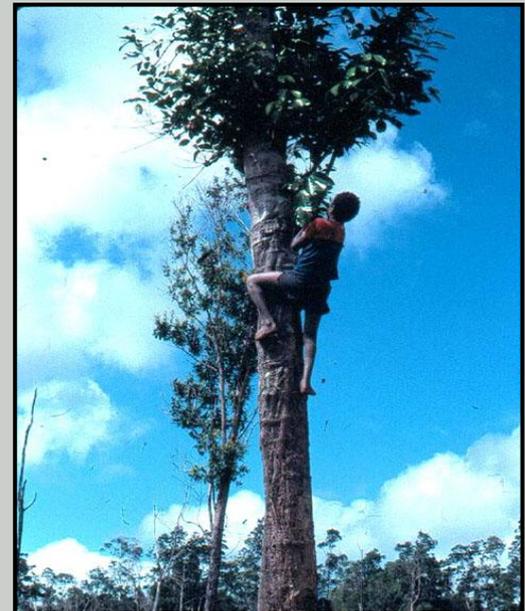
Suagafa



Houka Suga Dae

Dae fasia

Sa naroka



Young leaves, nuts and flowers can all be eaten.

Gnetum gnemon

Sweetleaf - a tasty leafy shrub

Popular in Asia and Solomon Islands



Young leaves are eaten raw and older leaves are cooked. Fruit can be used for jam.



Sauropus androgynus



Pumpkin leaves

Best from locally selected tropical plants



Cucurbita moschata

Bebero/ Geke - an edible hedge



Nyia kalo

Kobikobi

Denngi

Momotu

Taqala

Bebenu

Paa

Geke

Bebero



Plants can be grown from seed or cuttings.



Polyscias fruticosa* and *Polyscias verticillata

Climbing swamp fern - a sweet fern

It often grows up trees in swamps



The very young fronds are eaten raw or cooked.



Ponolo

Aono

Rosi

Rara

Nivi kakla



Stenochlaena palustris

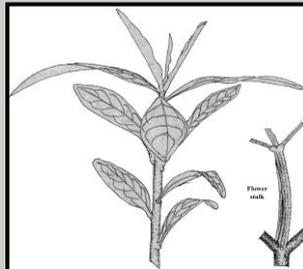
Kwalo rara

Nya Nave

Waterleaf - grows in moist soils



Talinum triangulare



The slightly sour young stems and leaves are best steamed to make them less slimy. They should not be eaten in large amounts.

Sweet fern

Popular throughout Asia and the Pacific

Beautiful cooked in coconut milk. It can be fried, steamed and used in stews.

Gleilei Mula Pusa Kosikosiri
Kasume Raramea Takuma sisimia

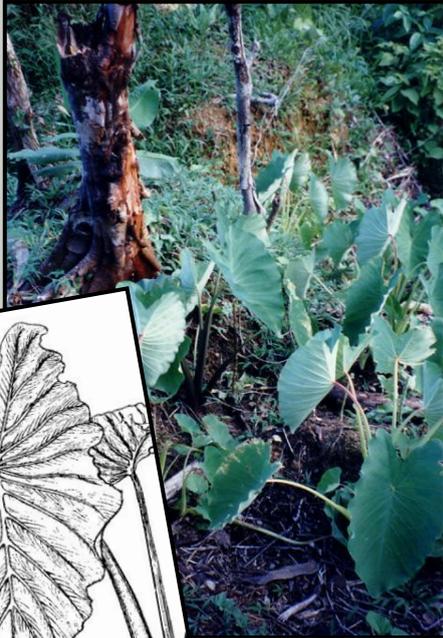
It grows in damp ground and along banks of streams.



Diplazium esculentum



Taro leaf - a good quality delicacy



Colocasia esculenta

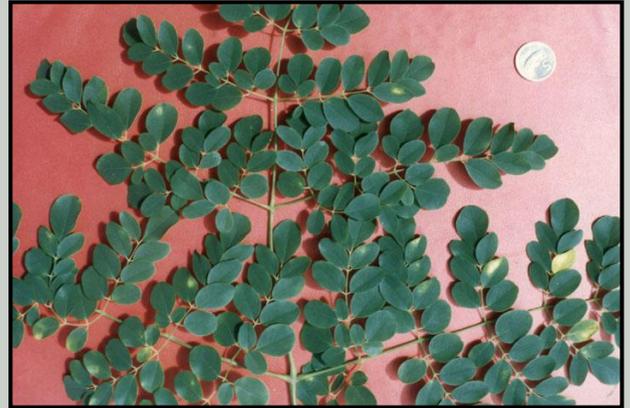
Drumstick tree

A very nutritious introduced tree legume



Moringa oleifera

Trees can be grown from seed or cuttings.

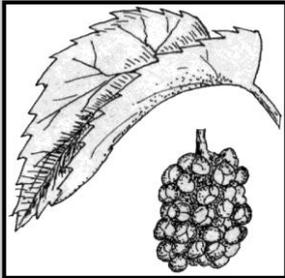


***Moringa* is a very nutritious edible leaf, eaten cooked. The pods, seeds and flowers can also be cooked and eaten.**



Mulberry leaves

Good for silk worms and people!



Plants are easy to grow from cuttings.



Morus alba



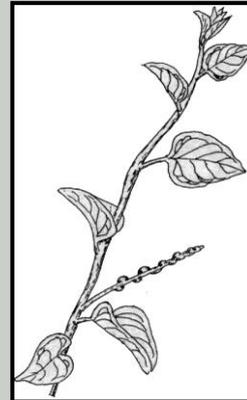
Mulberry fruit can be eaten raw or cooked. The young leaves can be cooked in stews.

Indian spinach - a climbing coastal green

This creeper can form a lovely shady shelter near houses.



Basella rubra



The leaves can be eaten raw or cooked. They are a little slimy but help thicken soups.

Watercress

A special plant for mountain streams running off limestone

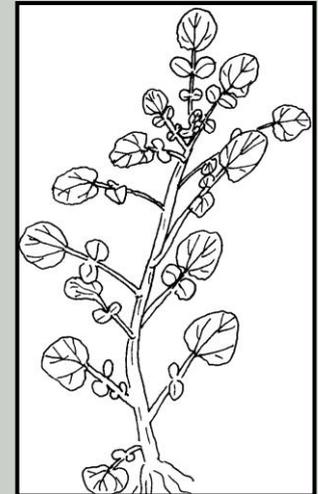


Plants are easy to grow from cuttings planted along the edges of streams with clear running water.



Rorippa nasturtium-aquaticum

Watercress has a mildly spicy flavour and is nutritious, with good levels of protein, vitamins and minerals.



Puka/Rafarafa - the lettuce tree



Pisonia grandis

Puka

Niuli

Rafarafa

Thathava

Panu marawa

Nyia nyime bula



Trees are often self-sown on rocky headlands where sea birds drop the sticky seeds while cleaning their feathers. Trees can be grown from cuttings.

Ofenga - a Malaita special



Pseuderanthemum whartonianum

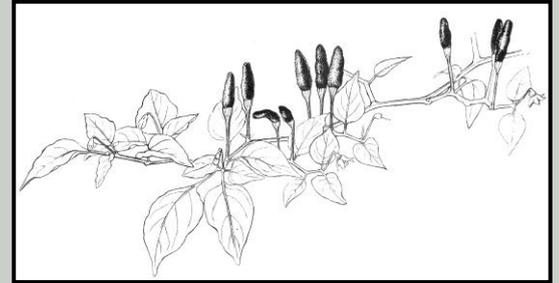
Faele	Burape	No taeve
Ute	Sungu	Nyia nyivale
Wasina	Gure	Wasina



Aidua
Gurape

Chilli leaves - a spicy bonus

**Chilli fruit are very hot.
The leaves are not quite so hot and
very nutritious.**



Capsicum frutescens



Leafy greens of Solomon Islands



Kangkong

Dark green leaves should be eaten daily. They should be cooked and can be steamed, fried or boiled.



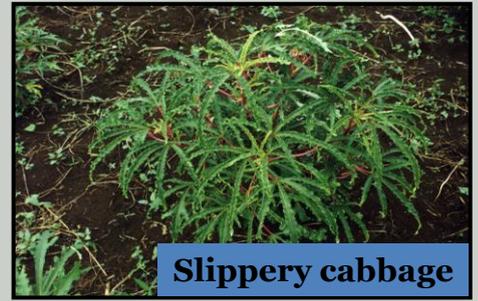
Amaranth



Snake bean

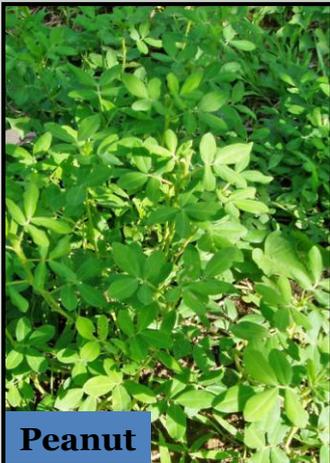


Chilli



Slippery cabbage

Edible leaves



Edible leaves



Ball head cabbage



Chinese cabbage



Pigeon pea



Capsicum



Pawpaw



Celosia



Asian pennywort



Chrysanthemum

Edible leaves



Cat's whiskers



Taro



Jute



Okinawan spinach



Pumpkin



Tree fern fronds



Lemon grass



Swamp taro

Edible leaves



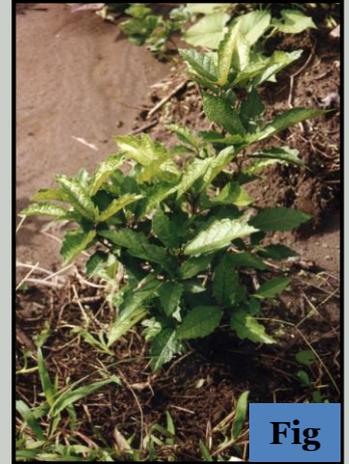
Sweet fern



***Diplazium pro.*
fern**



Dracontomelon



Fig



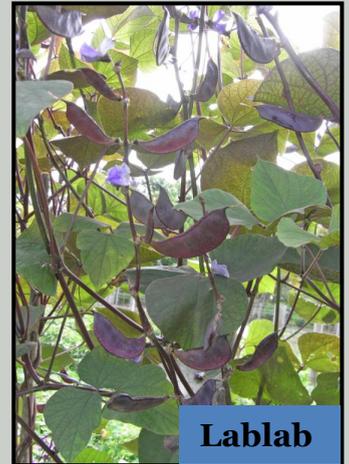
Rosella



Kangkong

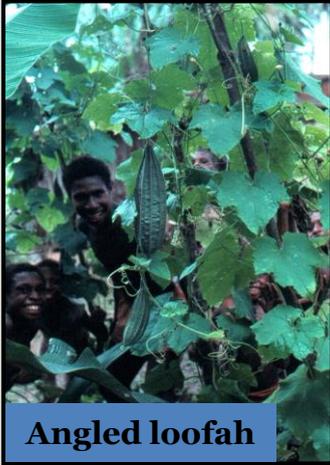


Kumara



Lablab

Edible leaves



Angled loofah



Smooth loofah



Cassava



Mint



Indian mulberry



Moringa



Mulberry



Velvet bean

Edible leaves



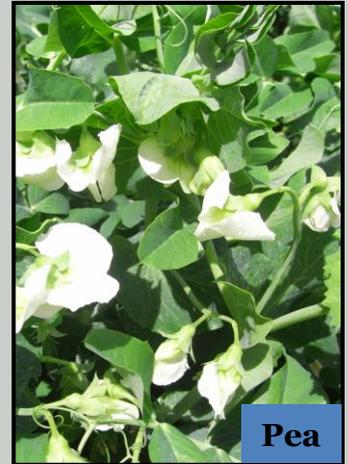
Parsley



Lima bean



Lettuce tree



Pea



Polyscias



Ofenga



Japanese radish



Watercress

Edible leaves



Watermelon



Gnetum



Chilli



Amaranth



Cucumber



Lettuce

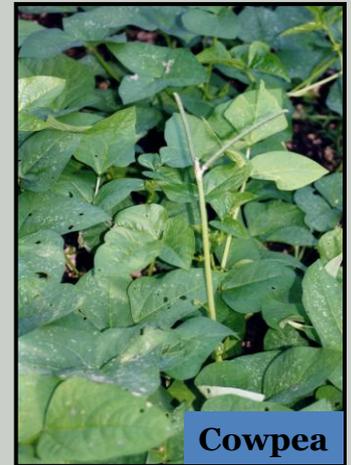
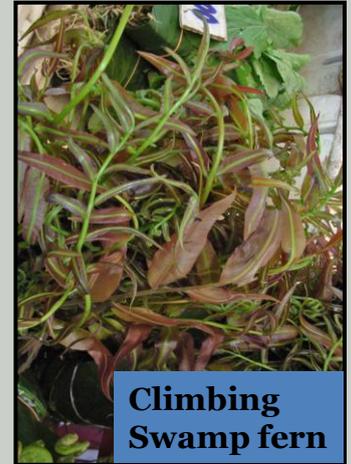
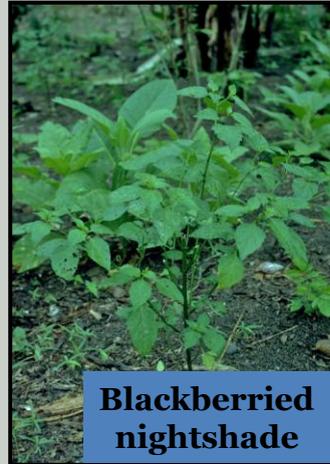


Endive



Cobbler's pegs

Edible leaves



Edible leaves



Chinese taro



Common bean



Spondias



Bitter cucumber



Giant taro



Winged bean



Long bean



Sweet basil

Plant poisons

Some foods contain substances that can cause illness. Check preparation methods before eating. Some examples are:

- **Bacteria on leaves can cause stomach upsets. Food should be cooked to kill bacteria.**
- **Cyanide is a poison commonly found in plants (e.g. cassava). It makes them bitter, but is destroyed when food is well cooked.**
- **Oxalates are common in plants (e.g. taro). They are sour and can burn the throat. Changing the water during cooking can reduce oxalates.**
- **Plants can accumulate nitrates that are poisonous to children. This happens when excess nitrogen fertilisers are added to some leafy vegetables (e.g. amaranth).**

Solomon Islands

land of great vegetable foods



Mangrove fruit



Wax gourd



Coastal pitpit

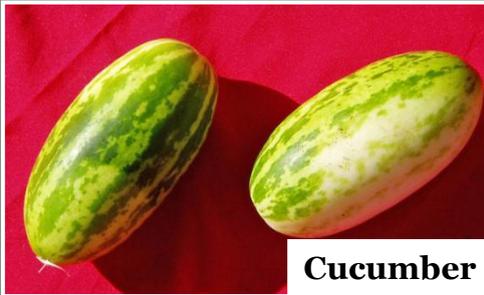


Fei banana

Vegetables for variety and nutrition



Coastal pitpit



Cucumber



Ginger



Indian spinach

As some vegetables only grow in certain seasons, families should plant a wide range to provide food all year.

Some vegetables and edible leaves should be planted near houses so they are easily available, even on wet days, or when people can't get to distant gardens.



Choko

Vegetables - nutritious and tasty



Long pitpit



Snake gourd



Lima bean

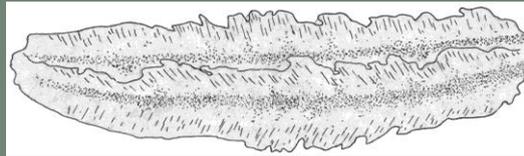
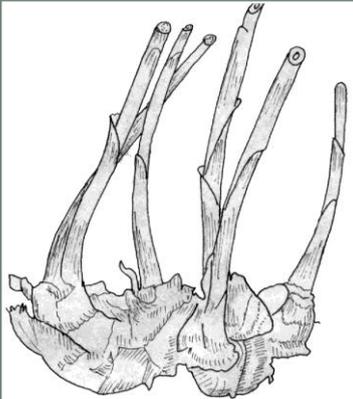


Winged bean

For taste and rich diets, eat a variety of vegetables!

- Daily garden attractions
- Provide nutrition lacking in root crops
- Many are loved by children
- Beans are especially important in diets

**Our daily
gifts to make
meals and
diets better**



Coastal pitpit - great in coconut milk



An attractive and nutritious seasonal food.



Uzoro

Gari

Bira

Kua

Losi

Grerei

Saccharum edule

Choko - a pumpkin family fruit

Suited to slightly higher places in the hills



The young leaves, fruit, seeds and fleshy root can all be cooked and eaten.



Sechium edule



Granadilla - a passionfruit family special



Young fruit are cooked and eaten as a vegetable. Ripe fruit can be eaten as a sweet.

The leaves are poisonous and should not be eaten.



Passiflora quadrangularis

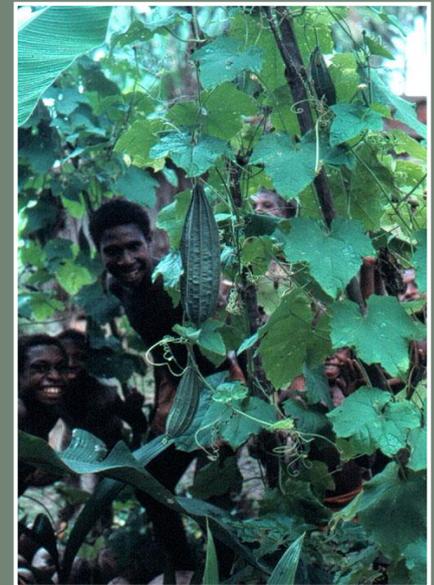


Angled loofah - a tropical special

Young fruit and leaves are cooked and eaten. Seeds can be roasted and eaten.



Luffa acutangula



Snake gourd - a tasty treat



Trichosanthes cucumerina



**Young fruit and young leaves
can be cooked and eaten.**



Bitter cucumber - a spicy addition



The young, bitter fruit are used in soups and stews. The fruit is also a medicinal food that helps control virus diseases.

The young tender leaves can be cooked and eaten as flavouring.



*Momordica
charantia*

Seeds are best soaked for 24 hours before planting. Plants need a trellis to climb over.

Wax gourd - liked by Chinese



The flesh is used in stir fried dishes. Seeds can be fried, and young leaves and flower buds can be cooked, before eating.



Benincasa hispida

Smooth luffa - edible when young



Very young fruit can be eaten in soups and stews. The seeds can be roasted and eaten as a snack.



Cucumber - a popular snack best grown from locally saved seed

Cucumber leaves can be eaten



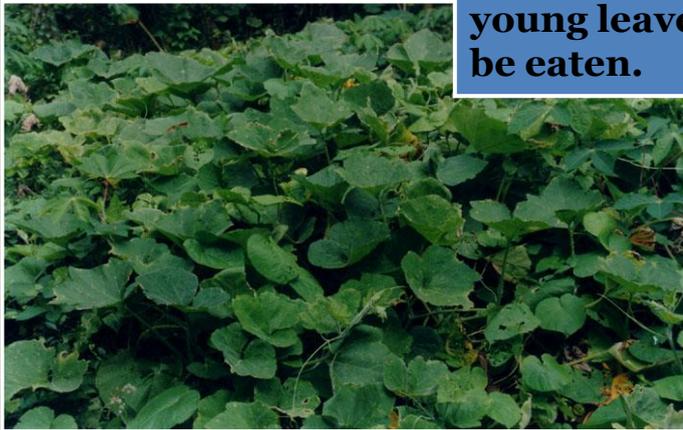
Cucumis sativus



Pumpkin - edible leaves and fruit



Saving local seeds produces plants with less disease. Seeds are roasted and young leaves can be eaten.



Cucurbita maxima and Cucurbita moschata



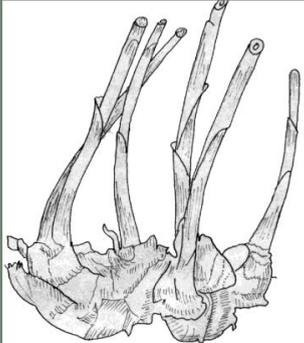
Turmeric - a spice and a colouring

A common colouring and flavouring, especially on some atoll islands.



Curcuma longa

Ginger - a flavouring and a food



**Enjoyed
fresh and
as a
flavouring**

*Zingiber
officinale*



Corn - a popular snack



Zea mays



**Corn needs
good seed, good
soils and good
rainfall to
produce well.**



Winged bean - an amazing plant

Eat the leaves, flowers, pods, seeds and roots!



*Psophocarpus
tetragonolobus*

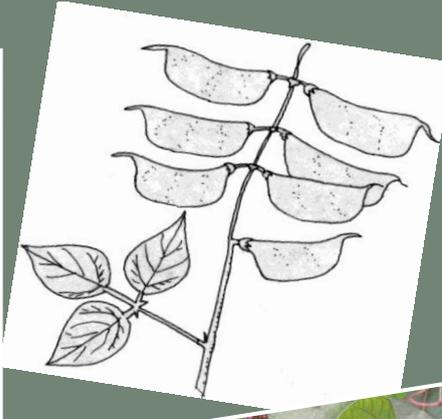


A very important plant that provides good quality food and improves the soil. Fattened roots often only develop in cooler locations.



Lablab bean - a traditional bean

Lablab purpureus



A popular climbing bean with leaves, pods, seeds and roots that can be cooked and eaten.

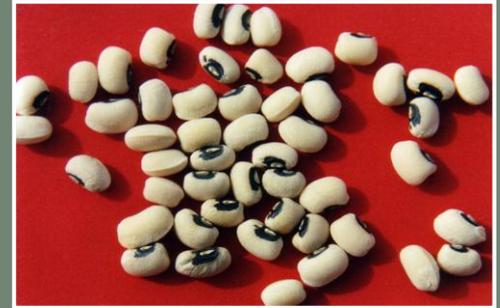


Cowpea - popular in some areas

A good cover crop and soil restorer



The young leaves, young pods and seeds can be cooked and eaten.



Vigna unguiculata
subsp *unguiculata*

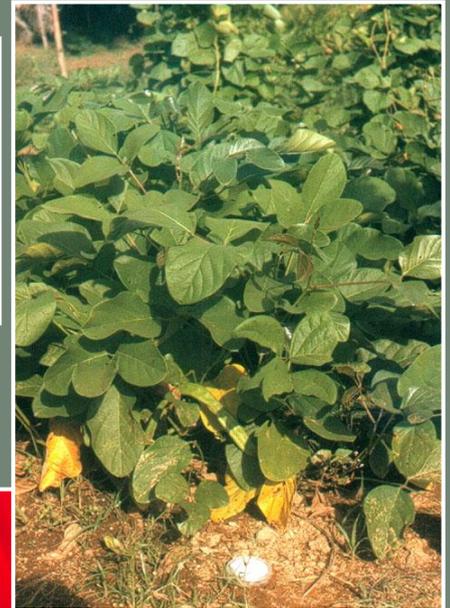


Sword bean - grown in a few places



The young pods can be cooked and eaten. The seeds should be well cooked before eating.

Canavalia gladiata



Jack bean - grown in a few places



Canavalia ensiformis

The young leaves and young pods and flowers can be cooked and eaten. The seeds can be boiled or roasted.

Pigeon pea - a shrub with edible seeds and leaves



*Cajanus
cajan*



The leaves, pods, seeds and sprouts can all be cooked and eaten.



Pigeon pea has deep roots that recycle nutrients and help it grow in drier places. Being a legume, it puts nitrogen into the soil.

Soybean - an introduced subtropical bean, encouraged in some places

Soybean is almost as good a food as winged bean, but it is better suited to subtropical countries, whereas winged bean suits the tropics.



Glycine max

The young pods and the ripe seeds can be cooked and eaten.

Tree ferns - cooked and eaten with meat



Cyathea hornei

Kwa'e bulu

Kurakwa

Kugui

Reve



Cyathea vittata



*Cyathea
brackenridgei*

Young shoots of several different Asian and Pacific *Cyathea* tree ferns are cooked and eaten with meat.

Mostly, tree ferns are not planted, but just kept as garden land is cleared.

Mangrove fruit - grated, cooked and eaten



Koa kini

Aongo

Petu

Tongo

Ko'a ania

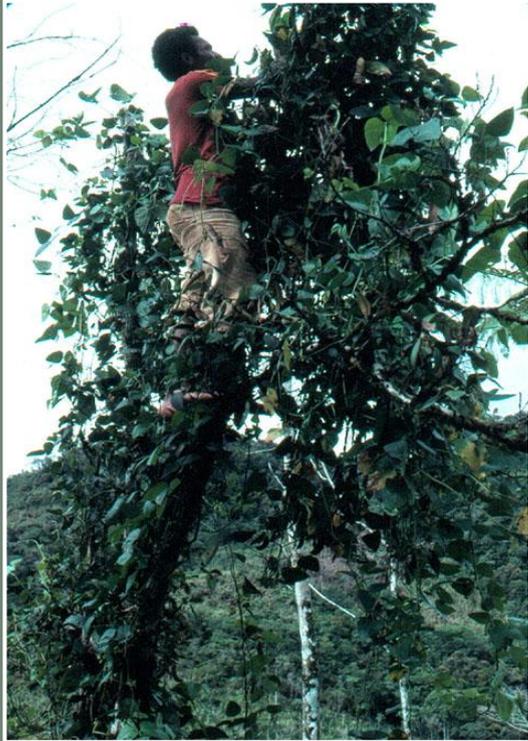
**The cooked
fruit contain
protein, iron
and zinc**



Bruguiera gymnorrhiza



Lima bean - a traditional bean



Plants grow better in slightly cooler, hilly places.

Phaseolus lunatus



The seeds, pods and leaves are all cooked and eaten.

Snake bean - suits the lowlands



Snake bean grows easily and the leaves, pods and seeds can be cooked and eaten.



Vigna unguiculata subsp *sesquipedalis*

It is far more suitable for tropical lowland places than common bean.



Banana buds - a special vegetable



Musa spp.



The male flower buds of several kinds of bananas are shredded and cooked and eaten. They contain some protein and iron.

New vegetables in Solomon Islands

Chinese cabbage



Lettuce



Bean



Ball head Cabbage

New vegetables - tasty treats

From cooler or more temperate climates

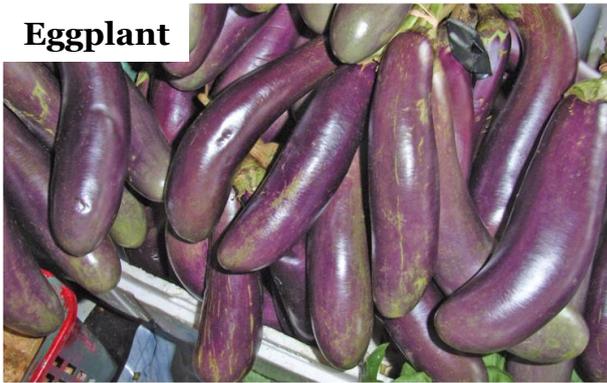
Capsicum



Tomato



Eggplant

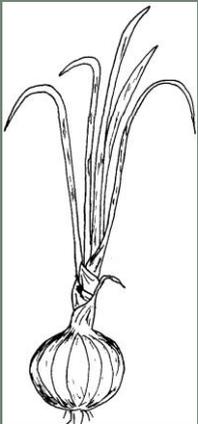


Carrot

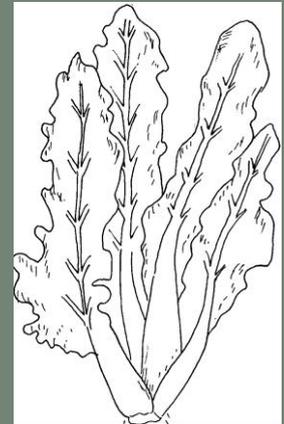


Things you should know about new vegetables

- They often need to be grown from bought seed
- They often need fertiliser to grow well
- Many need to be sprayed to reduce insects
- They often have lower food value than local foods
- They need more care, or crops can fail



Plants for temperate places



Chinese cabbage - quick growing, but low food value



**Chinese cabbage grow fast but
have low food value.**



Brassica chinensis

Ball head cabbage - it will survive frost, but it has little food value!



Feeding cabbage to children should be discouraged. It fills their small stomachs, but is a poor quality food.



Brassica oleracea var capitata

Common bean - a temperate plant, not suited to the hot humid tropics

Phaseolus vulgaris



Other beans, such as snake bean and winged bean, get fewer pests and disease problems in lowland coastal areas.

Lettuce - open leafy types have some food value

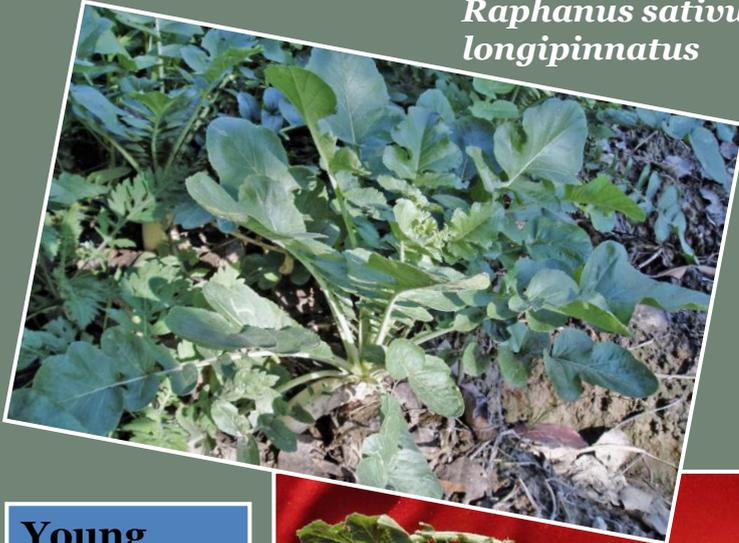
Lactuca sativa



It is best to grow the open, leafy, dark green types. Most lettuce have low food value.

Japanese radish - a tasty treat

Raphanus sativus var
longipinnatus



**Young
leaves and
roots can
be cooked
and eaten.**



Eggplant - a flavouring for dishes



*Solanum
melongena*

**The fruit can be
fried, grilled,
baked or stewed
before eating.**



Tomato - used in salads and sauces



Tomato plants get their roots badly twisted by “root knot nematodes”.



Tomato leaves should not be eaten. The fruit have small amounts of nutrients.

Lycopersicon esculentum

Okra - edible leaves and fruit



Abelmoschus esculentus

Leaves are edible cooked, like slippery cabbage. The pods can be eaten cooked or used to thicken soups.



Acknowledgements

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