Potentially Important Leafy Greens and Vegetables in the Western Pacific

Practical ways of growing local food plants and doing it well
Two Llamas Environmental & Social Projects works with remote Indigenous communities throughout Oceania and Southeast Asia. We partnered with Food Plant Solutions to help improve nutritional intake by sharing knowledge, strengthening self-reliance and improving food security. For further information about our work, please reference: www.twollamas.org.au

For further details about the program please contact us at: info@foodplantsolutions.org or info@supwildernessadventures.com (Two Llamas Environmental & Social Projects)

In addition to this booklet, other publications have been produced for the Western Pacific. All can be downloaded from our website - www.foodplantsolutions.org

We encourage and welcome your support.

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

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- Good Gardening and Growing Root Crops in the Western Pacific
Western Pacific
islands of beautiful leafy vegetables

Okra

Sweet fern

Ofenga

Bean leaves
Leafy greens - the health foods of the nation

- Slippery cabbage
- Amaranth
- Sweet potato
- Boabab
Many edible leafy greens grow around houses and along roadsides.

Green leafy vegetables should be cooked.

Healthy food
Healthy people eat 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

Iron (mg/100 g)

- Boabab - leaf
- Cassava - leaf
- Bitter cucumber - leaf (raw)
- Winged bean - leaf
- Peanut - leaf
- Sesbania - leaf
- Sweet potato - leaf
- Mango - leaf
- Ball head cabbage - leaf (raw)
- Lettuce - leaf
Vitamin C for good health

Vitamin C (mg/100 g)

- Cassava - leaf
- Bitter cucumber - leaf (raw)
- Pawpaw - leaf
- Sweetleaf - leaf
- Marrow - leaf
- Sesbania - leaf
- Mango - leaf
- Okra - leaf
- Ball head cabbage - leaf (raw)
- Lettuce - leaf

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Vitamin A value of leaves

- Chinese taro - leaf
- Winged bean - leaf
- Taro - leaf (cooked)
- Spinach jointfir - leaf
- Ball head cabbage - leaf (raw)
- Pumpkin - leaf
- Sweetfern - frond
- Taro - leaf (stalk)
- Lettuce - leaf
- Bitter cucumber - leafy tips (boiled)
Slippery cabbage - a delicious, highly nutritious leaf

Fry or steam it to avoid it going slimy.

Abelmoschus manihot
Amaranth - a quick growing green
A home garden favourite

Scattering seeds in old fire ashes helps plants grow well.

*Amaranthus spp*
Chinese Taro

*Xanthosoma sagittifolium*

A nutritious leaf that grows easily.
Cyrtosperma merkusii

Swamp taro grows in fresh or brackish swamps.

Leaves and young flowers can be cooked and eaten.
Sweet potato leaf

Ground cover or climbing plant

Leaves are edible raw or cooked.

 Ipomoea batatas
Spinach jointfir

Gnetum gnemon

A sweet tender green.
Sweetleaf - a tasty leafy shrub
*Popular in Asia and Western Pacific*

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 maxima
Manihot esculenta

Young leaves are edible after cooking.
Sweet fern

*Popular throughout Asia and the Pacific*

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

Diplazium esculentum

It grows in damp ground and along banks of streams.
Taro leaf - a good quality delicacy

Colocasia esculenta
Ofenga - a Malaita special

Pseuderanthemum whartonianum
Leafy greens of the Western Pacific

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

- Mango
- Amaranth
- Snake bean
- Marrow
- Slippery cabbage
Edible leaves

- Okra
- Taro
- Slippery cabbage
- Swamp taro

Pumpkin
Edible leaves

- Bitter cucumber
- Spinach jointfir
- Pawpaw
Edible leaves

Pigeon pea

Cassava

Peanut

Sweetleaf

Guava
Edible leaves

Carrot

Cashew

Kapok

Boabab
Edible leaves

- Sweet potato
- Chinese Taro
- Sweetfern
- Watermelon
- Ofenga
- Winged bean
- Amaranth
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).
The Western Pacific islands of great vegetable foods

- Bitter cucumber
- Okra
- Long pitpit
Vegetables for variety and nutrition

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.
Vegetables - nutritious and tasty

Long pitpit

Amaranth

Snake bean

Winged bean
Long pitpit - great in coconut milk

An attractive and nutritious seasonal food.

Saccharum edule
Okra - a tropical plant

Suited to the lowlands rather than the highlands

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

*Abelmoschus esculentus*
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.

Momordica charantia

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

Seeds are best soaked for 24 hours before planting. Plants need a trellis to climb over.
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_
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.
Snake bean - a traditional bean

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

*Vigna unguiculata subsp. sesquipedalis*
Horse tamarind

Young pods can be boiled and eaten.

Leucaena leucocephala
Peanut — grows best in dry areas

Arachis hypogea

Seeds can be eaten raw or cooked.
Pigeon pea - a shrub with edible seeds and leaves

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

Cajanus cajan

Pigeon pea has deep roots that recycle nutrients and help it to grow in drier places. Being a legume it puts nitrogen into the soil.
Banana buds - a special vegetable

The male flower buds of several kinds of bananas are shredded and cooked and eaten. They contain some protein and iron.
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Solutions to Malnutrition and Food Security