

# Food plants for healthy diets in Timor Leste



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



*Solutions to Malnutrition  
and Food Security*



A project of the Rotary Club of Devonport North,  
District 9830 and Food Plants International



[www.foodplantsolutions.org](http://www.foodplantsolutions.org)

# Food plants for healthy diets in Timor Leste



World Vision's Better Food, Better Health project in Timor-Leste, supported by the Australian Government - Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, (DFAT), aims to address high anaemia and under-nutrition rates among children under five and their mothers through food based approaches and improving health seeking behaviour. Food Plant Solutions publications provide educational resources to East Timorese, particularly women, with the aim of creating awareness and enabling a better understanding of the nutritional value of their local food plants.

For further details about the project please contact us at [info@foodplantsolutions.org](mailto:info@foodplantsolutions.org).

We welcome and encourage your support.

**Food Plant Solutions** - A project of the Rotary Club of Devonport North, Rotary District 9830 & Food Plants International.

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# Using food plant resources well



Moringa

The health, well-being and food security of a nation requires making the best use of all available food plant resources.



Cassava



Peanut



Kangkong



Slippery cabbage



Banana



Taro



Lesser yam

# *Food plants for healthy diets in Timor Leste*



With a rich, diverse tropical climate and a variety of soils, altitudes, and



rainfall patterns it is time to discover and explore the amazing range of frequently over-looked tropical food plants that suit the locations, and are rich in nutrients.



It's time for Timor Leste to be proud of its own tropical foods.



# Healthy diets

To stay healthy all people, and especially children, should eat a wide range of food plants. This should include some plants from each of the food groups - energy foods, growth foods and health foods. Then each of the nutrients required by our bodies will be met in a balanced manner.



Growth food

Health food

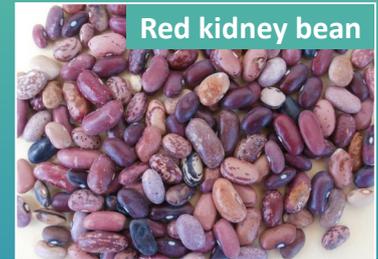


Energy food

# Food security



Taro



Red kidney bean



Cassava



Slippery cabbage



Moringa



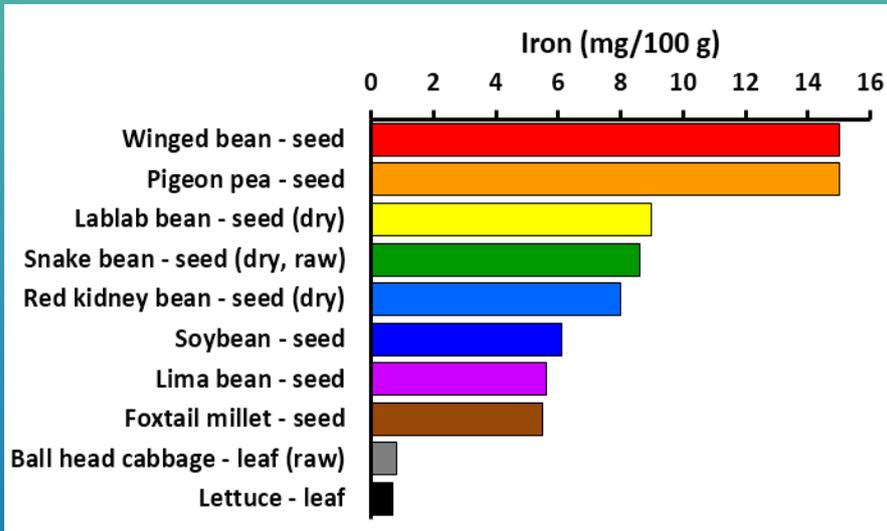
Amaranth



Sweet potato

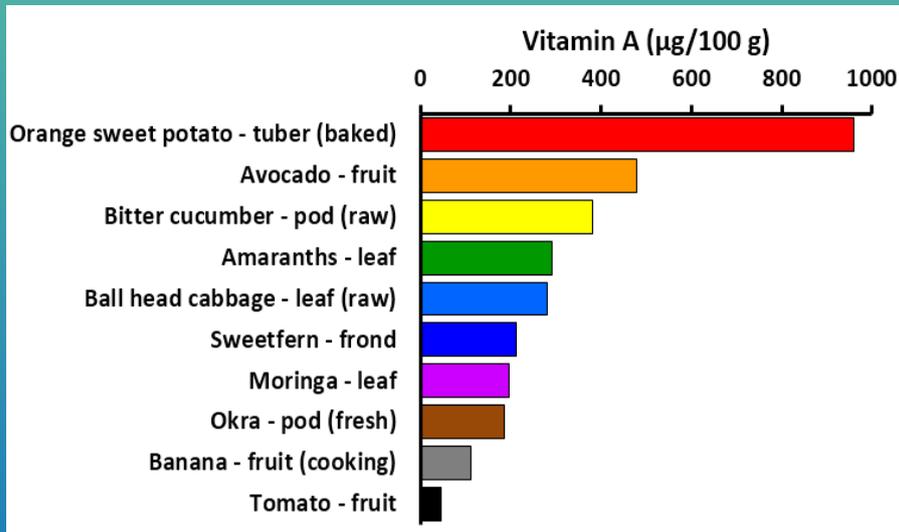
Grow a range of different food plants, planted at different times throughout the year, so food doesn't become short in some seasons. This should include fruit and nut trees.

# Iron for healthy blood



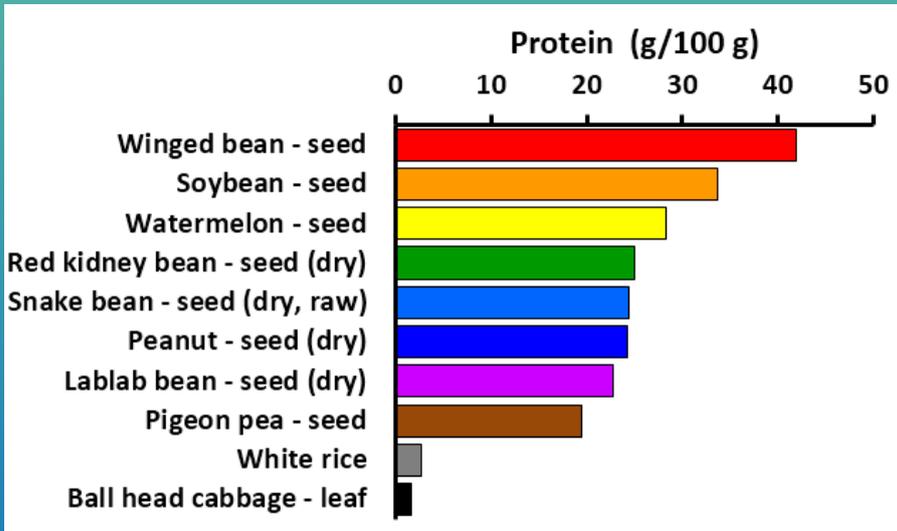
Iron is important in our blood. It is what makes our blood red. Iron helps oxygen get to our lungs. This helps us to have energy to work. When we are short of iron we are called anaemic. Iron is more available when Vitamin C is also present. Soaking beans overnight before cooking them makes the iron more available.

# Vitamin A for good eyesight



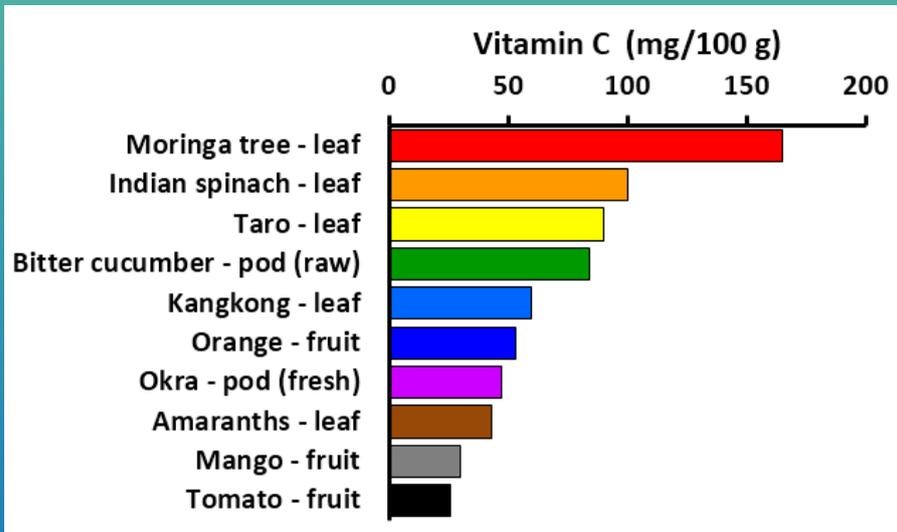
Vitamin A is very important for eyesight and fighting disease, particularly in infants, young children and pregnant women. People who are short of Vitamin A have trouble seeing at night. In plants, this chemical occurs in a form that has to be converted into Vitamin A in our bodies.

# Protein foods



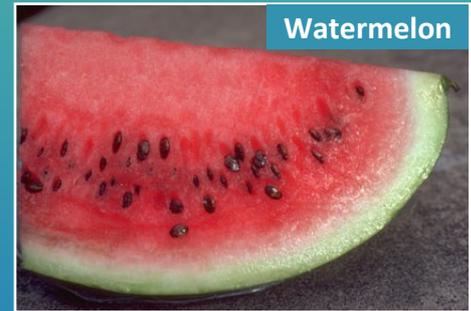
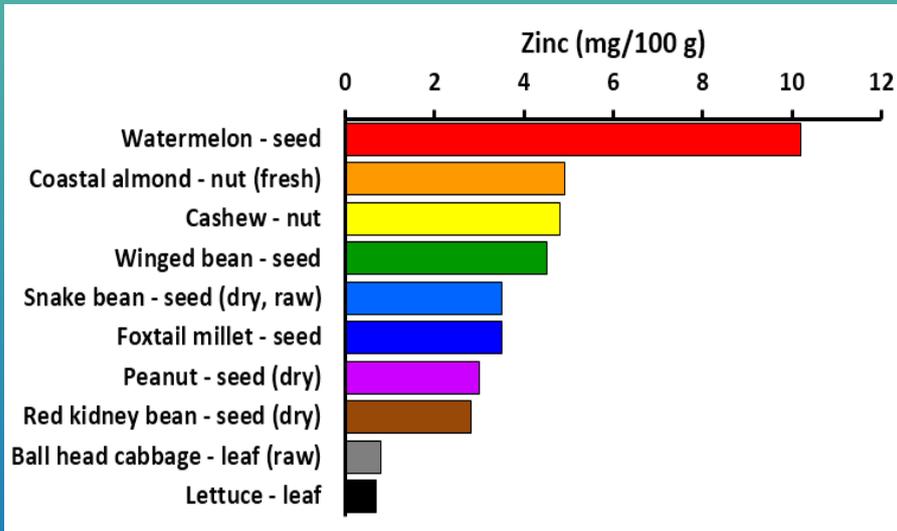
Food plants can be important sources of protein, particularly if fish and meat are not readily available.

# Vitamin C for good health



Vitamin C is important for helping us to avoid sickness.

# Zinc for growing bodies



Zinc is particularly important for young children and teenagers to help recover from illness and be healthy .

# *Leafy green foods*



Dark green tropical leaves are an important source of iron, protein and other vitamins and minerals essential for healthy diets. Everybody, especially women and children, should eat a hand full each day.



# *Root crops are perfect plants for hot humid tropical climates*

Taro



Starchy staple foods are the lifeblood of Timor Leste.

We need to look out for pests, disease and signs that the plants are growing in poor soil.

Lesser yam



Cassava



Chinese taro



Orange sweet potato

# *Beans provide protein and restore soils*



Beans have special bacteria attached to their roots that allow them to take nitrogen from the air and put it into the soil for plants to use.

**It is free fertiliser!**



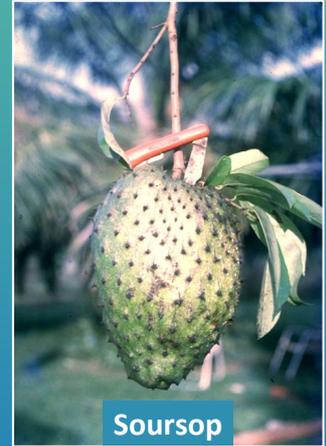
# *Everyone should eat some fruit everyday*

Fruit provide minerals and vitamins  
and other important nutrients that  
everybody needs to stay healthy and  
well.

Good farmers plant several kinds of  
fruit trees.



Mango



Soursop



Malay apple

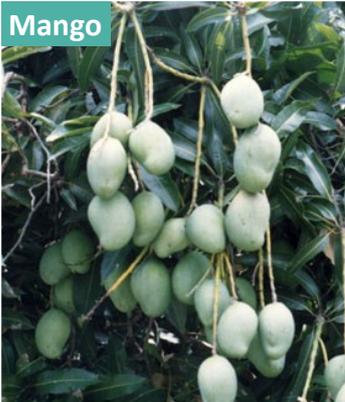


Watermelon

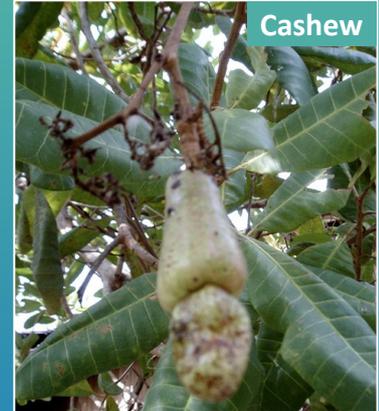


Pacific lychee

# *Fruit and nut trees for around houses*



Mango



Cashew

Fruit to be enjoyed by all.  
Some need to be planted for the future.  
Many fruit are seasonal.  
Some grow quickly.



Coastal almond



Breadfruit



Banana



Pacific lychee

# *Vegetables for variety and nutrition*



Okra

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



Tomato

Some vegetables and edible leaves should be planted near houses so they are easily available even on wet days, or when people are too tired or busy to go to distant gardens.



Bitter cucumber



Lotus root



Choko

# Plants for garden edges



Moringa



Candle nut



Soursop



Polynesian chestnut

# *Plants for the edge of gardens*



Pigeon pea

Larger plants can be grown around the edges of gardens.



Taro



Cassava



Watermelon

# *Plants for garden beds*

Amaranth



Okra



Peanut



Sweet potato



Foxtail millet



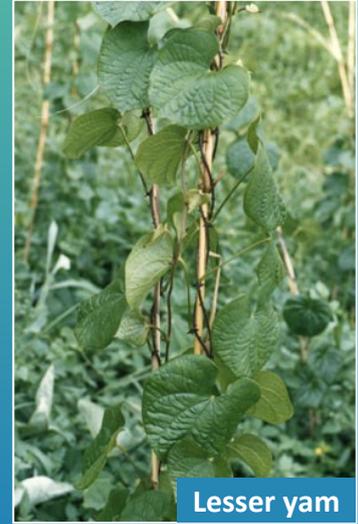
# *Plants to climb on fences*



Lablab bean



Winged bean



Lesser yam



Soybean

Many plants can be grown on fences around houses and gardens.

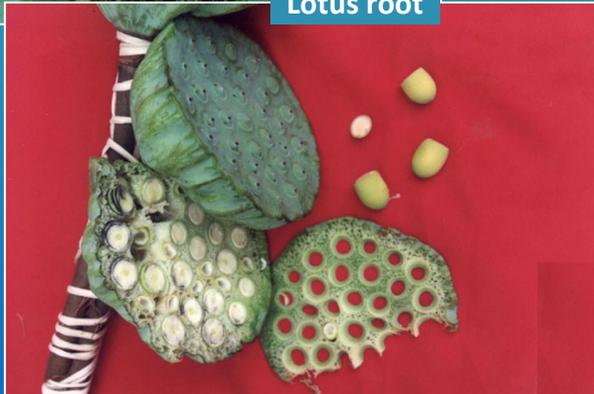


Red kidney bean

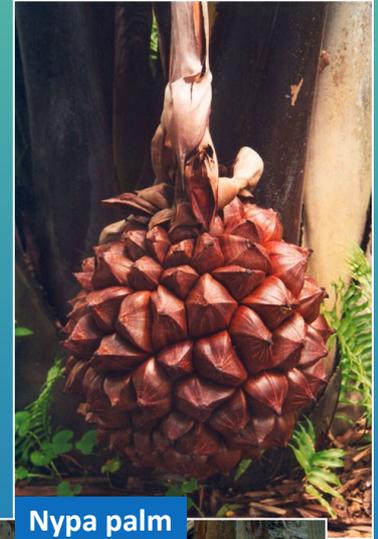
# Plants for swampy places



Lotus root



Food plants can be grown in all sort of places, even swamps.



Nypa palm



# *Pests, disease and deficiencies*



**Banana scab moth**

The very small moth hides from the sun under the flower bracts.

Plants that are grown well are less damaged by insect pests and diseases. They may go dry or pale in poor soil. It is important to recognise these signs and act early.



**Taro blight**

The taro blight fungus washes in the rain on hot wet nights.

This fungus scab gets bad when soils are poor, and also on varieties from overseas.



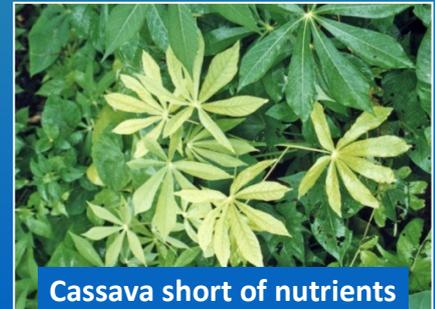
**Wrinkled sweet potato leaves**

This fungus makes leaves die off early when the leaves get damaged.



**Yam anthracnose**

Cassava growing in very poor coral soil cannot take up enough plant food.



**Cassava short of nutrients**

Scientific name	English	Tetun
<i>Abelmoschus esculentus</i>	Okra	Okra
<i>Abelmoschus manihot</i>	Slippery cabbage	Gedi tahan
<i>Aleurites moluccana</i>	Candle nut	Ai-kami
<i>Allium cepa var cepa</i>	Bulb onion	Lis mean
<i>Amaranthus tricolor</i>	Amaranth	Modo bayam
<i>Anacardium occidentale</i>	Cashew	Kaijú
<i>Annona muricata</i>	Soursop	Ai-ata boot
<i>Arachis hypogea</i>	Peanut	Fore rai
<i>Artocarpus altilis</i>	Breadfruit	Kulu
<i>Basella alba</i>	Indian spinach	Modo mean (dollar ai leten)
<i>Cajanus cajan</i>	Pigeon pea	Tunis
<i>Citrullus lanatus</i>	Watermelon	Pateka
<i>Citrus maxima</i>	Pomelo	Jambua
<i>Colocasia esculenta</i>	Taro	Talas

Scientific name	English	Tetun
<i>Dioscorea esculenta</i>	Lesser yam	Kumbili
<i>Diplazium esculentum</i>	Sweetfern	Modo kabura
<i>Glycine max</i>	Soybean	Fore keli
<i>Inocarpus fagifer</i>	Polynesian chestnut	Kastaña Polinézio
<i>Ipomoea aquatica</i>	Kangkong	Kanko
<i>Ipomoea batatas</i>	Orange Sweet potato	Fehuk-midar kór laranja
<i>Lablab purpureus</i>	Lablab bean	Ervilla
<i>Lycopersicon esculentum</i>	Tomato	Tomati
<i>Mangifera indica</i>	Mango	Has timor
<i>Manihot esculenta</i>	Cassava	Ai-Farina
<i>Momordica charantia</i>	Bitter cucumber	Baria
<i>Moringa oleifera</i>	Moringa	Marungi
<i>Musa sp (A &amp;/or B genome) cv.</i>	Banana	Hudi
<i>Nelumbo nucifera</i>	Lotus root	Talas moris iha kolam laran

Scientific name	English	Tetun
<i>Nypa fruticans</i>	Nypa palm	Bua moris be laran
<i>Persea americana</i>	Avocado	Abokat
<i>Phaseolus lunatus</i>	Lima bean	Ervilla nurak
<i>Phaseolus vulgaris</i>	Red kidney bean	Koto mean
<i>Pometia pinnata</i>	Pacific lychee	Ai-maras metan
<i>Psophocarpus tetragonolobus</i>	Winged bean	Duhaen
<i>Sechium edule</i>	Choko	Lakeru mutin
<i>Setaria italica</i>	Foxtail millet	Batar talin naruk
<i>Syzygium malaccense</i>	Malay-apple	Jambu air
<i>Terminalia catappa</i>	Coastal almond	Ai ketapang
<i>Vigna unguiculata subsp. sesquipedalis</i>	Snake bean	Fore talin naruk
<i>Xanthosoma sagittifolium</i>	Chinese taro	Talas
<i>Zingiber officinale</i>	Ginger	Ai-Lia

# Acknowledgements

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