POTENTIALLY IMPORTANT LEAFY GREENS AND VEGETABLES IN RWANDA

PRACTICAL WAYS OF GROWING LOCAL FOOD PLANTS AND DOING IT WELL

FOOD PLANT SOLUTIONS ROTARIAN ACTION GROUP

Solutions to Malnutrition and Food Security

The Mustard Seed Institute

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

www.foodplantsolutions.org
Potentially important leafy greens and vegetables in Rwanda

The vision of the Mustard Seed Institute is to be a community-based social enterprise providing practical and sustainable solutions for extreme poverty eradication and peace building through research and innovation, training and skills transfer, mediation and dialogues, in the rural community of Rwankuba, Eastern Province, Rwanda.

The Mustard Seed Institute has partnered with Food Plant Solutions to improve the health and well-being of the local community through education and advocacy on agricultural innovations, with a focus on gaining knowledge about which crops to grow in order to lower malnutrition levels amongst the local children.

For further details about the project please contact us at 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

Food Plant Solutions operates in accordance with Rotary International Policy but is not an agency of, or controlled by Rotary International.
Potentially important leafy greens and vegetables in Rwanda

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

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- Good Gardening and Growing Root Crops in Rwanda
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Rwanda -
country of beautiful leafy vegetables

Maasai stinging nettle

Silver spinach

Moringa

Bean leaves
Leafy greens -
the health foods of the nation

Shepherds purse

Indian spinach

Sweet potato

Jute
Using leafy greens
Collect and cook a mixture of leaves

Many edible leafy greens grow around houses and along roadsides.

Healthy food

Green leafy vegetables should be cooked.
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 cup full of dark green leaves every day to stay healthy.
- Some leafy greens can be grown as hedges, in swamps, and on soils around houses to provide a regular daily supply of leafy vegetables.
Iron is important, 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.
Vitamin C is important for helping us to avoid sickness.
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.
Small flowered quickweed - fresh leaves are a good source of Vitamin C

The leaves and the young stems can be eaten raw or cooked.

Galinsoga parviflora
Amaranth - a quick growing green and a home garden favourite

Scattering seeds in old fire ashes helps plants grow well.
Leaves can be harvested 4-5 weeks after planting.
Shepherd’s purse

Young tender leaves are eaten.

The leaves are a good source of Vitamin A.

Leaves can be cooked as a vegetable or eaten raw in salads.

Capsella bursa-pastoris
Sweet potato leaf

Leaves are edible raw or cooked.

Ipomoea batatas

Ground cover or climbing plant.
Maasai stinging nettle

Young leaves are wilted, boiled and eaten as a vegetable.

_Urtica massaica_
Moringa

A fast growing tree. The young tops and leaves are eaten cooked.

Moringa oleifera
Cassava

Young leaves are edible after cooking.

*Manihot esculenta*
Indian spinach

The leaves can be fried, steamed and used in soups and stews.

It grows up fences, sticks or over stumps.

*Basella alba*
Taro leaf

A good quality delicacy.

*Colocasia esculenta*
Silver spinach

The young shoots and leaves are cooked and eaten.

Celosia trigyna
Leafy greens of Rwanda

Dark green leaves should be eaten daily.

They should be cooked and can be steamed, fried or boiled.
Edible leaves

- Taro
- Cantaloupe leaf
- Pumpkin leaf
- Jute
- Peanut leaf
- Cantaloupe leaf
Edible leaves

Cassava

Pigeon pea

Egyptian sesban
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).
Vegetable foods of Rwanda

Bottle gourd

Angled loofah

Maize
Vegetables for variety and nutrition

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.

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

- Mung bean
- Scarlet runner bean
- Eggplant
- Marrow
Finger millet - versatile seeds

The seeds can be roasted or ground into flour.

Eleusine coracana
Eggplant

The fruit can be eaten fried, gilled, baked, stuffed or stewed.

They can also be dried for storage.

*Solanum melongena*
Bitter cucumber

The leaves are also eaten.

The young, bitter fruit can be boiled, stuffed, fried or pickled.

*Momordica charantia*

Soaking seeds for 24 hours before planting improves germination.
Pumpkin

The fruit can be baked, boiled, fried, steamed or mashed.

Cucurbita maxima
Scarlet runner bean

A climbing bean that can re-grow from the tubers.

*Phaseolus coccineus*
Bottle gourd

Young fruit can be boiled, steamed, fried or pickled. Young tips and leaves can be eaten.

Lagenaria siceraria
Peanut

Grows best in dry areas.

Seeds can be eaten raw or cooked.

Arachis hypogea
Pigeon pea - a shrub with edible seeds and leaves

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.

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

Cajanus cajan
Sorghum

*Sorghum bicolor*

The seed is eaten as cereal and ground to make flour. It is used for dumplings, fried cakes and drinks.
Acknowledgements

This publication has been developed as part of a program undertaken by Food Plant Solutions Rotarian Action Group, made possible with funding from District 9830.

It would have not been possible without the commitment and support of the various volunteers who have shared the vision, and unselfishly given their time and energy to support this project.

Review, layout and formatting – Lyndie Kite, John McPhee and Executive Officer Karalyn Hingston

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