FOOD PLANTS FOR HEALTHY DIETS IN CAMEROON

PRACTICAL WAYS OF GROWING LOCAL FOOD PLANTS AND DOING IT WELL

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

www.foodplantsolutions.org
Hope for a better future (H4BF) cooperative society is a Cameroon youth led non-governmental, apolitical and non-denominational organization formed in 2009. H4BF’s mission is to create opportunities for growth and poverty reduction, so as to enhance sustainable development initiatives in the country.

H4BF, in its intervention strategies, seeks key partnership opportunities and networks to shape the evolution of food systems in Cameroon to end poverty and hunger amongst the rural poor, especially vulnerable groups including pregnant women and young children. H4BF adopts verified sustainable innovative agricultural practices with a special focus on climate-smart agriculture and building more inclusive and efficient food value chains. The partnership with Food Plant Solutions boosts the implementation of this key strategy and brings H4BF closer to achieving this goal.

In addition to this booklet, other publications, which can be downloaded from our website (www.foodplantsolutions.org), have been created for Cameroon.

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. This booklet is based on information from the Food Plants International (FPI) database, “Edible Plants of the World”, developed by Tasmanian agricultural scientist Bruce French.

Food Plant Solutions operates in accordance with Rotary International Policy but is not an agency of, or controlled by Rotary International.
Using food plant resources well

The health, well-being and food security of a nation requires making the best use of all available food plant resources.
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.
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** - e.g. Sweet potato
- **Growth foods** - e.g. Cashews
- **Health foods** - e.g. Grain amaranth

Then each of the nutrients required by our bodies will be met in a balanced manner.
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 dried peas 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.

![Sweet potato](image)

![Sweet basil leaf](image)
Protein foods

Food plants can be important sources of protein, particularly if fish and meat are not readily available.
Vitamin C is important for helping us to avoid sickness.

Vitamin C for good health
Zinc for growing bodies

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

Dark green leaves are an important source of iron, protein and other vitamins and minerals essential for healthy diets.

Dark green leaves contain folate, which all women of child-bearing age need.

Low levels of folate at conception can lead to serious birth defects.

Everybody, especially women and children, should eat a hand full of leafy greens each day.
Root crops are perfect plants for hot humid tropical climates.

Starchy staple foods are the lifeblood of Cameroon.

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

Fruit to be enjoyed by all.

Some need to be planted for the future.

Many fruit are seasonal. Some grow quickly.

Cashew

Cape gooseberry

Carambola

Pawpaw
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 are too tired or busy to go to distant gardens.
Plants for garden edges

Coastal almond

Moringa

Mango

Eggfruit tree
Plants for the edge of gardens

Larger plants can be grown around the edges of gardens.

Greater yam
Chinese taro
Pigeon pea
Burweed
Plants for garden beds

- Maize
- Purslane
- Sticky cleome
- Soybean
- Sweet potato
Plants to climb on fences

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

- Catkin blooming
- Bitter cucumber
- Greater yam
- Smooth loofah
Acknowledgements

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