Potentially Important Leafy Greens and Vegetables of Uganda

Practical ways of growing local food plants and doing it well

FOOD PLANT SOLUTIONS
ROTARIAN ACTION GROUP
Solutions to Malnutrition and Food Security

A project of the Rotary Club of Devonport North, District 9830 and Food Plants International
www.foodplantsolutions.org
The purpose of Food Plant Solutions is to enable people to understand the nutritional value of local food plants through our educational materials and support services, because every minute of every day, five children under the age of five die from malnutrition.

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

We encourage and welcome your support.

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Food Plant Solutions operates in accordance with Rotary International Policy but is not an agency of, or controlled by Rotary International
Uganda
country of beautiful leafy vegetables
Leafy greens -
the health foods of the nation

Edible hibiscus

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 fish tin full of dark green leaves every day to stay healthy.
- Some leafy greens can be grown as hedges, in swamps, and around houses to provide a regular daily supply of leafy vegetables.
Green leafy vegetables - Iron content

- Pigeon pea
- Winged bean

Bar chart showing iron content (mg/100g) for various vegetables:

- Pigeon pea - seed
- Winged bean - seed
- Sesame - seed (dry)
- Governor's plum - fruit
- Angled luffa - leaf
- Sebastian tree - leaf
- Jute - leaf (raw)
- Bullrush millet - seed
- Ball head cabbage - leaf (raw)
- Lettuce - leaf
Vitamin C for good health

Guava

Java bean
Vitamin A value of leaves

- Sweet potato - tuber (baked)
- Jute - leaf (raw)
- Ethiopian Kale - leaf (fresh)
- Tamarillo - fruit
- Spring onion - leaf (raw)
- Silver beet - leaf (boiled)
- Ball head cabbage - leaf (raw)
- Chinese taro - leaf
- Maize - seed (mature)
- Tomato - fruit
Edible hibiscus - 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

A nutritious leaf that grows easily.

*Xanthosoma sagittifolium*
Rocket

Leaves and young flowers can be eaten.

Grows best in soils enriched with compost and organic matter.

Eruca vesicaria subsp. sativa
Sweet potato leaf

Leaves are edible raw or cooked.

Ground cover or climbing plant.

*Ipomoea batatas*
Jute

First leaves can be harvested after 6 weeks.

Corchorus olitorius
Silver beet

Leaves and stalks can be eaten. Stalks can be cooked separately. Can produce for up to two years.

An annual plant. 

Beta vulgaris subsp. cicla
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
Angled loofah

*Luffa acutangula*
Leafy greens of Uganda

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

- Taro
- Chinese taro
- Ethiopian kale
- Okra
- Edible hibiscus
- Chinese taro
Edible leaves

Winged bean leaf

Cashew leaf

Sebastian leaf
Edible leaves

- Guava
- Cassava
- Peanut
- Pigeon pea
- African eggplant
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).
Vegetable foods of Uganda

Angled loofah

Okra

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

Bambara groundnut

Winged bean

African eggplant

Chinese taro
Bullrush millet - versatile seeds

The young ears can be roasted and eaten like sweet corn.

Pennisetum glaucum

The seeds are eaten like rice.
Okra

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.
Angled loofah

Luffa acutangula

The leaves can be used in salads or cooked.

The young fruit are cooked and eaten.

Seeds are best soaked for 24 hours before planting. Plants need a trellis to climb over.
The seeds, leaves and young pods are all eaten.

*Phaseolus lunatus*
Winged bean

A popular climbing bean with leaves, pods, seeds and root tubers that can be cooked and eaten.
Bambara groundnut

Seeds can be eaten fresh while immature or dried and made into coffee.

Young pods are cooked as a vegetable.

Vigna subterranea
Peanut

Grows best in dry areas.

Seeds can be eaten raw or cooked.
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
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.
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