

# 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



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# Potentially Important Leafy Greens and Vegetables in Uganda



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*Solutions to Malnutrition and Food Security*

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

We encourage and welcome your support.

**Food Plant Solutions** - A project of the Rotary Club of Devonport North,  
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# 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



Healthy food



Many edible leafy greens grow around houses and along roadsides.



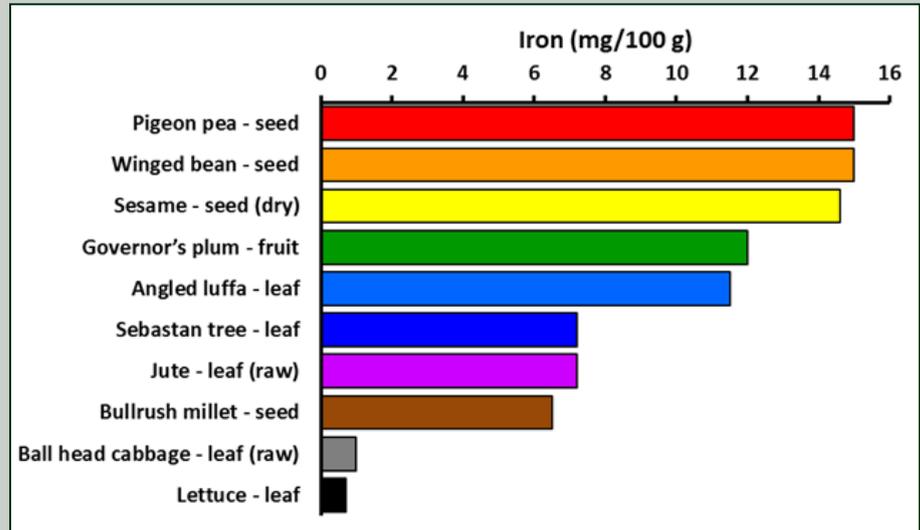
Green leafy vegetables should be cooked.



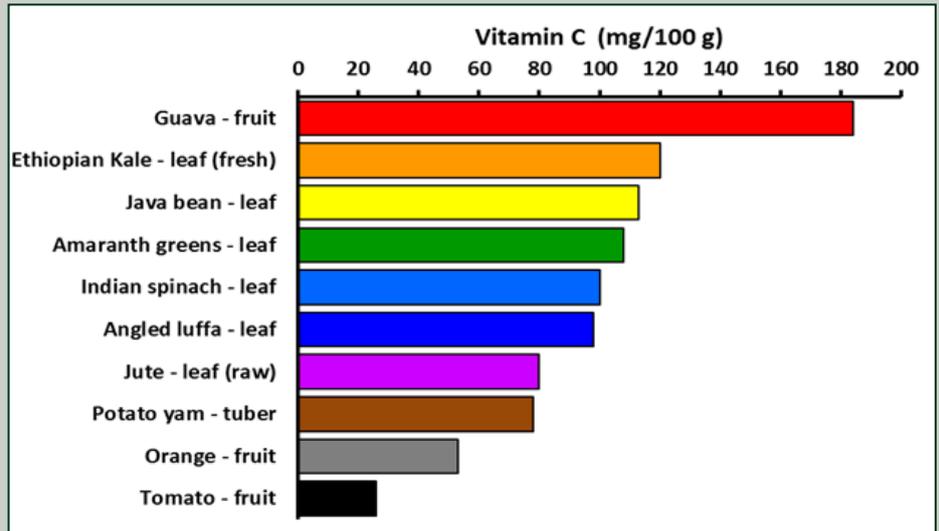
# Healthy people eat leafy greens

- **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.**

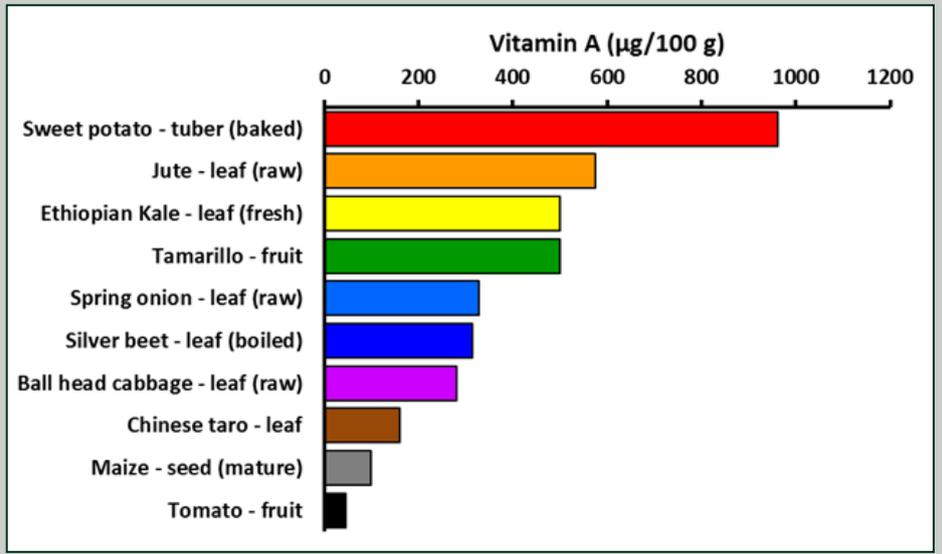
# Green leafy vegetables - Iron content



# Vitamin C for good health



# Vitamin A value of leaves



# 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***

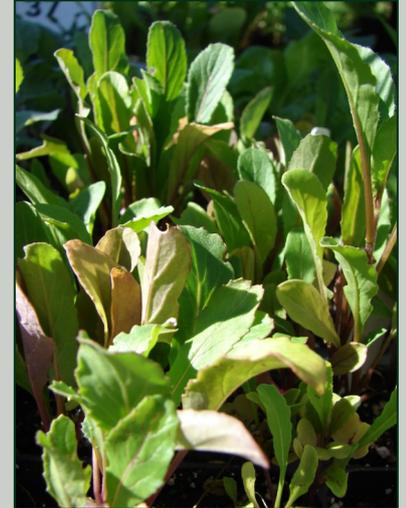
# Rocket



**Grows best in soils enriched  
with compost and organic  
matter.**



**Leaves and young  
flowers can be eaten.**



***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



An annual plant.



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



*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*

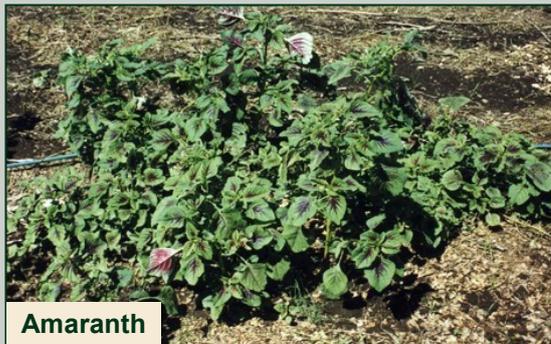
# Angled loofah



*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**



**Edible hibiscus**



**Okra**



**Ethiopian kale**



**Chinese taro**

# Edible leaves



Winged bean leaf



Cashew leaf



Sebastian leaf

# Edible leaves



# 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).**



# 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.



**African eggplant**



**Chinese taro**



**Spring onion**

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

# Vegetables - nutritious and tasty



# Bullrush millet - versatile seeds



*Pennisetum glaucum*

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



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.



*Abelmoschus  
esculentus*



# Angled loofah



The young fruit are cooked and eaten.



The leaves can be used in salads or cooked.

*Luffa acutangula*

Seeds are best soaked for 24 hours before planting. Plants need a trellis to climb over.



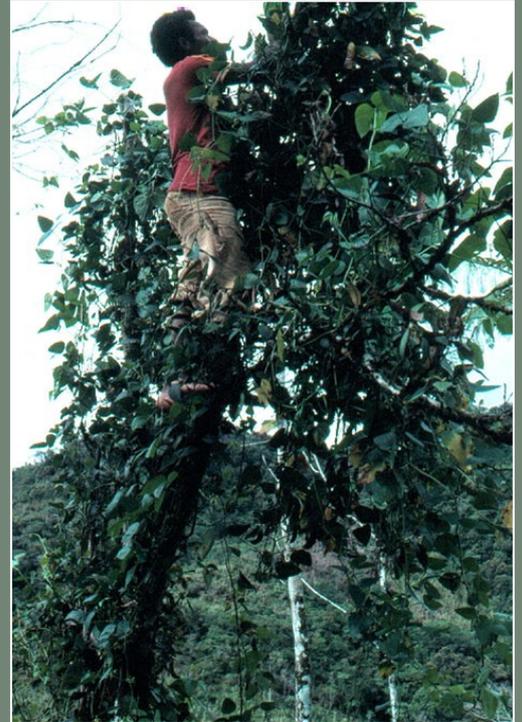
# Lima bean



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.



*Psophocarpus tetragonolobus*

# 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.



*Arachis hypogea*

# Pigeon pea - a shrub with edible seeds and leaves



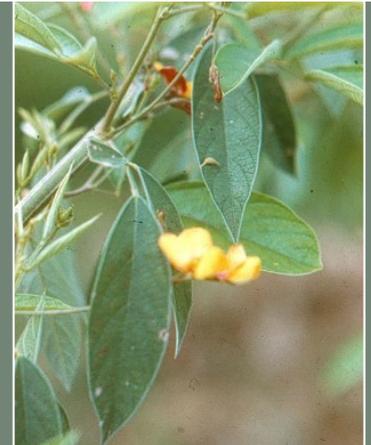
Pigeon pea has deep roots that recycle nutrients and help it to grow in drier places.

Being a legume it puts nitrogen into the soil.



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

*Cajanus cajan*



# 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.

# Acknowledgements

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**Review, layout and formatting – Lyndie Kite and John McPhee**

**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.

**Rotary**



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# Notes



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