

Potentially Important Food Plants of Central African Republic



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

A project of the Rotary Club of
Devonport North and District 9830

www.foodplantsolutions.org

Potentially Important Food Plants of Central African Republic (CAR)

Dedication

This book is dedicated to the 3 billion hard working farmers and families around the world who cultivate these, and other, food plants for their own subsistence, and who help conserve them in their rich diversity for other people to enjoy.

Preface

This guide is based on information from the Food Plants International (FPI) database developed by Tasmanian agricultural scientist Bruce French. The source material and guidance for the preparation of the book has been made possible through the support of Food Plants International, the Rotary Clubs of District 9830, particularly the Rotary Club of Devonport North who founded Food Plant Solutions, (previously the LearnØGrow project), and many volunteers who have assisted in various ways.

The selection of plants included in this guide has been developed by Lyndie Kyte working in a voluntary capacity using the selection criteria developed by Food Plant Solutions. These selection criteria focus on the local plants from each of the main food groups with the highest levels of nutrients important to human nutrition and alleviation of malnutrition. It is intended as a **Draft Guide only** to indicate some important food plants that serve as examples for this purpose. Other important nutritious plants may be equally useful, and it is recommended that the FPI database be used to source information on the full range of plants known to occur in Central African Republic. This guide has been developed with the best intention to create interest and improve understanding of the important local food plants of Central African Republic, and on the understanding that it will be further edited and augmented by local specialists with appropriate knowledge and understanding of local food plants.

Food Plant Solutions was initiated by the Rotary Club of Devonport North to assist in creating awareness of the edible plant database developed by Food Plants International, and its potential in addressing malnutrition and food security in any country of the world. In June 2007, Food Plant Solutions was established as a project of Rotary District 9830, the Rotary Club of Devonport North and Food Plants International. The primary objective of the project is to increase awareness and understanding of the vast food resource that exists in the form of local plants, well adapted to the prevailing conditions where they naturally occur, and how this resource may be used to address hunger, malnutrition and food security. For more information, visit the website www.foodplantsolutions.org. More detailed or specific information on plants, including references to material by other authors, is available on DVD on request.

Disclaimer: This Field Guide has been produced using information from the “Edible Plants of the World” database compiled by Bruce French of Food Plants International. Although great care has been taken by Food Plants International and Food Plant Solutions, neither organisation, or the people involved in the compilation of the database or this Field Guide:

- makes any expressed or implied representation as to the accuracy of the information contained in the database or the Field Guide, and cannot be held legally responsible or accept liability for any errors or omissions
- can be held responsible for claims arising from the mistaken identity of plants or their inappropriate use
- assume responsibility for sickness, death or other harmful effects resulting from eating or using any plant described in the database or this Field Guide

Always be sure you have the correct plant, and undertake proper preparation methods, by consulting with specialist scientists or local users of the plant. The Food Plants International database, from which the information in this Field Guide is drawn, is a work in progress and is regularly being amended and updated.

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Introduction

Potentially Important Food Plants of Central African Republic has been produced to provide information on approximately 40 edible plants that are known to grow in Central African Republic. These plants come from all the major food groups and have been chosen because of their high nutritional value. Many of the plants in this book may be neglected and under-utilised plants. This means they may not be well known. However, because they are high in many beneficial nutrients, and they are already adapted to the environment, and therefore likely to require minimal inputs, they could be important food plants that are likely to be superior to imported foods and plants. Commercially grown plants may also be included in the book, but only if they are significant foods for household consumption. It is hoped people will become confident and informed about how to grow and use these plants as many local food plants provide very good quality food.

Growing food

Growing food to feed a family is, without doubt, one of the most important things anyone can do. The more interest you take in your garden and the more you learn about plants and how to grow them well, the more interesting and fun food gardening becomes.

A country with very special plants

The local food plants of most countries have not been promoted and highlighted in the way they deserve. Visiting a local food market will quickly show what a rich variety of food plants can be grown in this country. Good information about these plants is often still in the minds and experience of local farmers, and has not been written down in books. This can make it hard for the next generation of young people to find out how to grow them.

In many countries, some of the traditional food plants are only harvested from the wild and others are only known in small areas. Others have hundreds of varieties and are the main food for people in different regions. Information on all these plants, their food value and the pest and diseases that damage them is available in the Food Plants International database.

Getting to know plants

People who spend time in gardens and with their food plants get to know them very well. It is a good idea to learn from someone who grows plants well. Each plant grows best in certain conditions and there are often special techniques in getting it to grow well. For example, sweet potato will not form tubers if the soil is too wet, but it may still grow lots of green leaves. Taro will grow in light shade, but sweet potato will not. Ginger can grow in fairly heavy shade. Pruning the tips of betel leaf or pepper vines will cause more side branches to grow and therefore, produce more fruit. Stored yam tubers need special treatment if you want them to put out shoots early. There are lots of unique things about every plant and learning about these helps a good gardener produce more food.

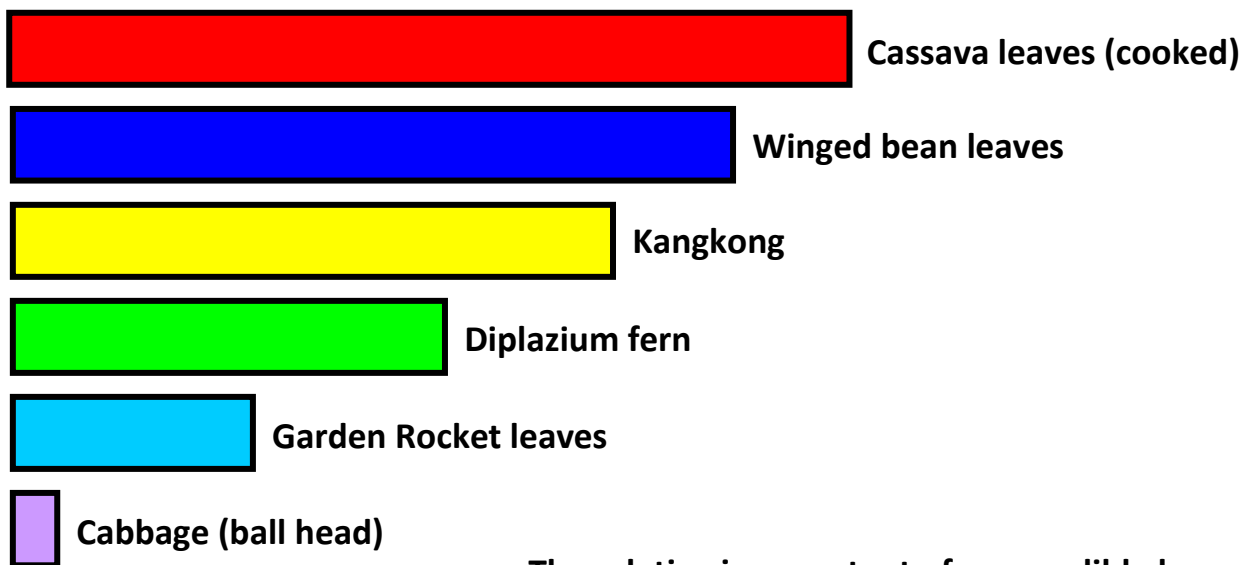
Naming of plants

Many food plants have local names, as well as a common English name. Every type of plant also has its own scientific name. Although the scientific name might not be widely recognised, this is the link by which people in different countries and with different languages can recognise the same plant. We know that many plants are grown in many different countries, but relying on local or common names, we might not recognise the same plant grown in different places. By using scientific names to accurately identify plants, we can get useful information from people in other countries. Wherever possible, plants in this book are named by their common English name and their scientific name.

Local food plants are often very good

People sometimes think that local food plants are not very special and that any food plant that is new or comes from another country must be a lot better. This is often not true. Many of the newer or introduced food plants, such as the round or ballhead cabbages, have very little food value. Many traditional tropical green, leafy vegetables and ferns have 10 times or more food value as ballhead cabbage or lettuce. It is important to find out more information about the food value of different foods if we want to eat well. Citrus fruit, such as lemons and oranges, are often grown for vitamin C that helps keep people healthy. These fruits do not grow well in the tropics-the common guava fruit has three times as much vitamin C and is loved by children. This is just one example that there are often much better choices of local foods with higher levels of important nutrients.

Our bodies need a variety of food plants to enable us to grow, stay healthy and have enough energy to work. Different foods are needed to provide energy, protein, vitamins and minerals. The following diagram highlights the iron content value of some traditional edible, tropical plant leaves, compared with cabbage. Iron is a nutrient that is very important for our bodies and especially our blood. People who are short of iron become anaemic and lack energy.



The relative iron content of some edible leaves

A healthy balanced diet

Good nutrition, or eating a healthy balanced diet, is really very simple. If people eat a wide range of food plants, their bodies will normally get a balanced amount of all the different nutrients they require. If a nutrient is lacking in one food plant, then they are likely to get it from another plant if they are eating a range of food plants. For this reason, everybody should eat a range of different food plants every day. The food group that is especially important for young people is the dark green leaves. Everyone should eat a good serving of dark green leaves every day. They have many vitamins and minerals, as well as protein. There are many spices or flavouring plants that can improve the taste of foods, but taste should be considered separately from food value.

Learning to cook well

Even though some nutrients in food can lose some of their value during cooking, it is normally much safer to cook all food plants, at least for a short time. Bacteria, which cause diarrhoea, can occur in gardens and on food plants. These are killed during cooking. Many plants in the tropics develop cyanide, a chemical that makes them bitter and poisonous. This happens often with cassava (tapioca, manioc) and beans, but can also occur in many other plants. Boiling the food for two

minutes normally destroys cyanide and makes the food safe to eat. Some of the nutrients our bodies need (such as vitamin A for good eyesight) only become available when food is cooked in oil.

Learning to grow “wild” food plants

Many plants grow wild in the bush and are not cultivated by people. We can normally find someone who has taken an interest in them and has learned to grow them. This may be people from a different language group. It may be that in their area they have found better types than the ones that simply grow wild.

Saving better types of plants

If we simply allow plants to grow from seed, the improvements that have been made in finding sweeter or better types may get lost. Some fruit trees are like this and the fruit produced may not be sweet at all. It is often necessary to take cuttings from a tree to be sure the new plant is exactly the same as the old one. If the plants won't easily grow from cuttings simply by sticking a piece of the branch in the ground, there are other ways of helping these plants to form roots and start to grow. One good way is to make a small cut in the bark of a young branch and then wrap soil around the cut and cover it with plastic. With plants like guava, new roots will start to grow from this cut and grow into the soil wrapped around the branch. It can then be cut off and planted. This is called air-layering. A similar method is used with the roots of breadfruit. A shallow root is uncovered and a small cut made from which a new sucker will start to grow. This can be cut off and replanted.

Growing from cuttings and suckers

Many food plants are grown from cuttings and suckers. This is very important, as it allows all the different kinds of yams, taros, bananas, sweet potato and sugarcane to be continually grown and ensures the varieties are preserved. Each plant has its own special propagation method. It is important to use healthy planting material, as diseases can be spread in planting material.

Saving seed

Some food plants are grown from seed. Sometimes this is very easy as the seeds are large, store well, grow easily and grow the same as the original plant. It is more difficult with other plants. Many large fleshy seeds, such as breadfruit, need to be planted while still fresh as they do not store easily. Other seeds do not “breed true” or do not grow into new plants that are the same as the original plants. For example, the fruit may not be as large or sweet or have the same colour or taste. With many of these plants, it may be necessary to find ways of growing them from cuttings or other methods such as grafting. Some plants “inbreed” and get smaller or poorer. This happens when a plant self-pollinates or receives pollen from a close relative. Corn grown in small plots normally does this and the plants grown from seed grown in this situation get smaller and smaller each year. The seed needs to be saved from several different plants with different history and then mixed together before sowing. All the seeds on one cob are related and will inbreed. Some seeds develop a hard seed coat and need to be scratched, soaked in water, or even put into hot water, before they will start to grow. Saving local seeds is often a good idea as they are already adapted to local conditions. For example, seed saved from pumpkins grown locally will produce plants with less pest and disease damage than those grown from imported seed. *If you can't get seeds or planting material from local gardens – it is probably not a suitable local plant!*

Growing a garden of mixed plants

In nature, one variety of one plant never grows alone. There are always lots of different plants of different kinds and sizes, all growing together. Anyone who has ever walked into a tropical jungle will know this very well. The reason people all over the world want to save the rainforest is because it has so many different kinds of plants all growing together. Growing plants in a food garden in a

way similar to how they grow in nature, as a mixed group of plants, is very good agriculture. Mixing plants in a garden usually gives more reliable food production, as any disease from one plant will wash off in the rain onto a different plant, where it cannot survive. Small plants fill the gaps and reduce the need for weeding.

Different types of plants for food security

There is another reason for growing a range of food plants in a local garden or around a village. If something goes wrong, like extreme insect damage to plants, some disease occurring in the garden, or a poor growing season, some plants will be more damaged than others. With a variety of plants, there will still be some food to eat until the other plants recover and grow again. Also, a wide variety of plants will mean that different ones will be maturing at different times, which helps ensure a continuous supply of food. There are shrubs that can be planted as edible hedges around houses, and fruit and nut trees that need to be planted as a gift for your children, several years before they will be able to enjoy them. Some nuts can be stored and eaten when other foods are not available. Most yams will store well for a few months.

Looking after the soil

Gardeners in traditional tropical agriculture usually move their gardens often by shifting to a new piece of land. There are usually three reasons for this:

- In the tropical lowlands, weeds can become a very big problem. There are usually a lot fewer weeds in the first year or two after clearing and burning the land, but weeds increase in the following years.
- Some of the nutrients in the soil are used each year and the soil becomes poorer and plants do not grow as well. There are ways of reducing this loss of nutrients.
- Very small worms called nematodes build up in the soil after a few years and get into the roots, especially of annual vegetable plants, and stop their roots working properly. For example, root knot nematode will cause the roots of plants like tomatoes and beans to become twisted resulting in poor growth of the plant.

Building up the soil

When a new garden has been cleared, it has lots of leaf mulch and other old plant material. This provides plant nutrients for new plants to grow. There is a simple rule for growing plants and improving the soil—"If it has lived once, it can live again." Any old plant material can provide nutrients for new plants to grow, but it must be allowed to rot into mulch or compost for this to happen. If this plant material is burnt, some nutrients, especially phosphorus and potassium ("potash"), get left behind in the ashes for new plants to use, although it also allows these important nutrients to be lost by being washed away by rain. But with burning other important nutrients, such as nitrogen and sulphur, get lost in the smoke and disappear from the garden and soil. These last two plant nutrients are especially important for growing green leaves and when their levels are low, plants grow small or pale green. When nitrogen is lacking, the old leaves of the plant go pale and fall off early, and when sulphur is lacking, the young leaves go pale. Wherever possible, old plant material should be covered with some soil to allow it to rot down and not simply dry out or get burnt.

Poor soils where crops won't grow

When soils are very acid (or sour), plants cannot get the necessary nutrients. Natural chemicals in the soil that are toxic to plants when present at higher levels become soluble, get into plants, and stop them growing. Adding limestone to these soils can improve them. Using compost will not make them less acid, but will keep the plant nutrients in the soil in a more readily available form that plants can use.

Soil nutrients

Plants need 16 different kinds of plant food or nutrients in different amounts to grow properly. A plant that has already been growing will have these nutrients in them and probably even have them in a balanced amount. That is why composting old plant material is so important. Plants usually show some signs or symptoms if any of these nutrients is running out.

One of the most common and important nutrients for plant growth is nitrogen, which actually comes from the air, but gets into plants through the soil. When plants are short of nitrogen, their older leaves often become yellow or pale. When grass family plants, like sugarcane and corn, are short of nitrogen, the centre of the oldest (lowest) leaves starts to develop a dry or dead V-shape. The plant cannot find enough nitrogen in the soil so it gets it from an old leaf to grow a new leaf. This causes the old leaf to die, forming a characteristic V-shape in the centre of the leaf. The plant does not get any bigger as an old leaf dies each time a new leaf is produced. Village farmers often walk through grassland before they clear it for gardens, looking to see if the grass leaves are dry and dead, because they know gardens on this soil won't grow well. It is necessary to use compost or legumes (such as beans) to put nitrogen back into the soil. Growing plants from the bean family (legumes) is the most efficient way to increase the level of nitrogen in the soil.

Corn is a good plant for indicating which nutrients are running short in the soil. If the older leaves go dry along the edges, the soil is running out of potash. If leaves that are normally green develop a bluish colour, the soil is short of phosphorus. Generally, leafy crops need lots of nitrogen, and root crops need lots of potash.

Making compost

Compost is old plant material that has been allowed to rot down into a fine, sweet smelling mulch that is full of nutrients that can be put back on the soil to grow new plants. Making good compost is very simple. A simple heap of plant material can be made in the corner of a garden or near a house. The composting process is carried out by small bacteria that live in the soil and feed on decaying plants. They break down old plant material into compost. These bacteria are living, so they need air, water and food. A good compost heap must have air, so don't cover it with plastic or put it in a container. This makes a foul smelling compost, as different bacteria that don't need air turn it into an acid mixture that preserves it. Good compost must have moisture, so keep the heap damp, but not too wet. The compost bacteria like a balanced diet, which means that both green material and dried material is needed to balance the carbon and nitrogen in the compost pile. If the compost material gets too dry and brown, it will not break down, and if it gets too green, it will go slimy. Using a little bit of compost from an old heap will make sure the right bacteria are there to start the whole process off. As soon as the plant material is broken down to a fine mulch it can be put onto the garden. It is best if it is dug in, but if it is regularly put onto the surface of the garden, worms will mix it into the soil.

Pests

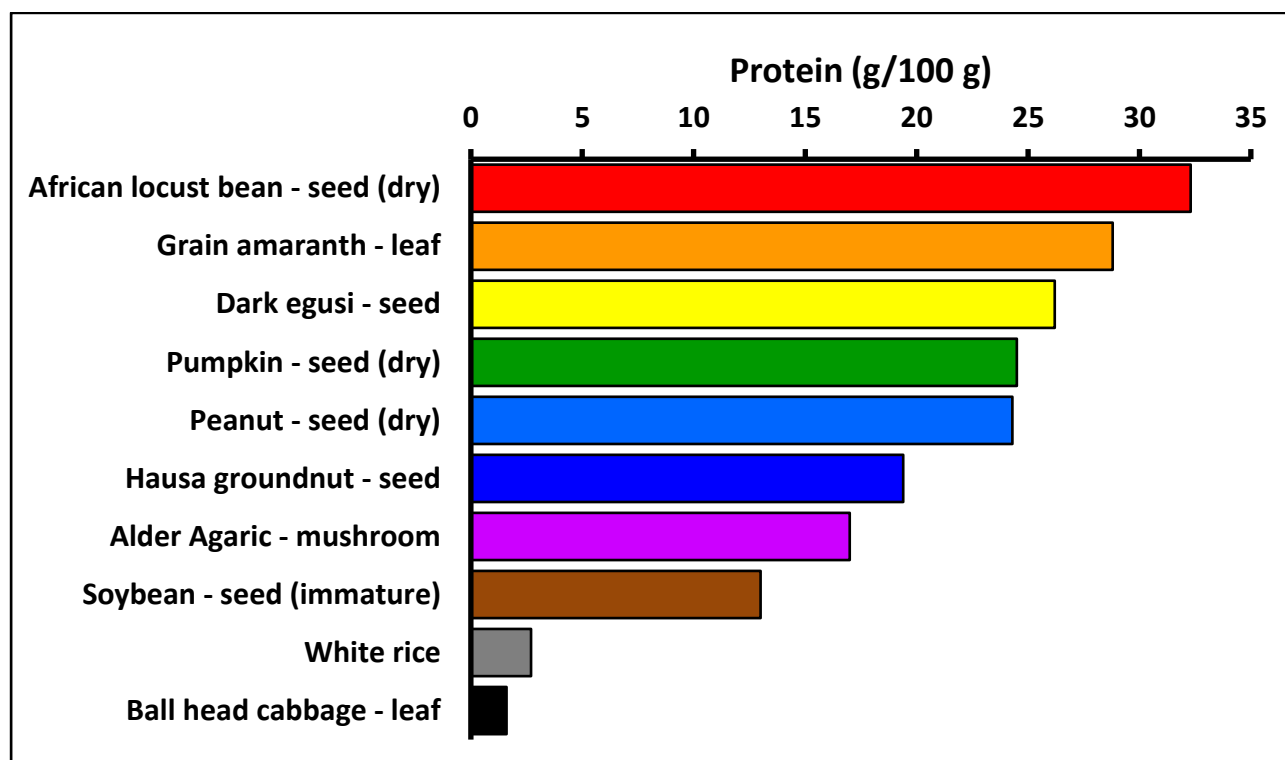
There are a large number of insects that enjoy sharing our food with us! We should not try to kill all these insects as they have an important role to play in keeping everything in nature in balance. What we need to do is to learn to manage these insects so we can all get some food to eat! Some insects are attracted to lights, and if the garden is near village lights some insects can cause a lot of damage. If large areas of one particular crop are planted, insects can breed more quickly and cause a lot of damage. As an example, insects called armyworms can breed up in large numbers on the shade trees of cacao and then move "like an army" into gardens. Some insects are large and breed slowly and can be picked off and removed. The large, green grubs with pointy tips that hide under taro leaves are best controlled by simply picking them off. Some insects, like taro beetles, can be a

serious problem, but the young curl grubs of this insect are tasty if you catch and cook them. Some insects do not like sunlight. The very small moth that damages banana fruit is like this. Simply pulling off the leafy bracts over the banana fruit reduces the damage, as this lets sunlight in and the insect flies away. The best rule for reducing pest damage is to grow healthy plants, as they suffer less damage.

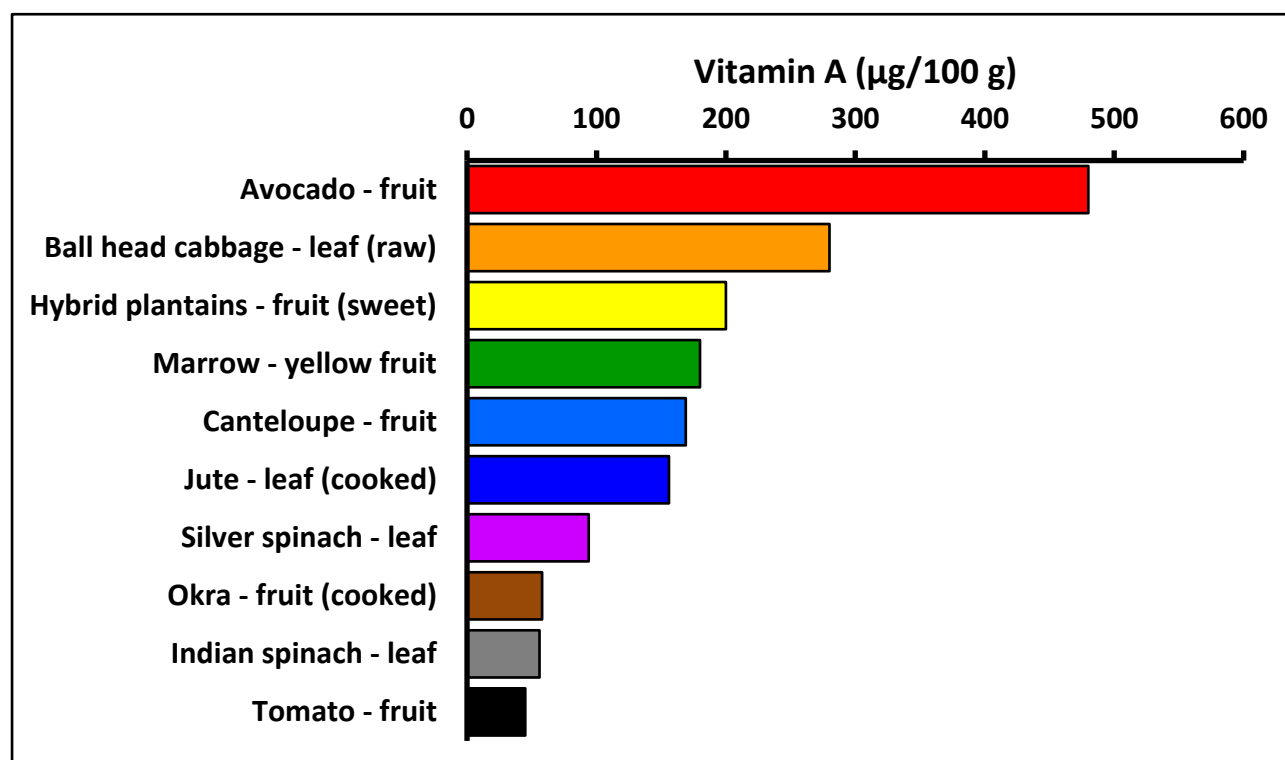
Diseases

The living organisms that cause disease are much smaller than insects. These disease organisms can often only be seen with a microscope. There are three main kinds of disease organisms-fungi, bacteria and viruses. Fungi are like the mushrooms we eat, only very much smaller. They usually make distinct dry spots on leaves and other plant parts. Fungi have spores that often blow in the wind. Bacteria are often smaller and live in damp places. They usually make plants go soft and squashy, and they may cause a smell. Bacteria are mostly spread with rain and in water. Viruses are very, very small and usually make irregular stripes and patterns on leaves and other plant parts. Viruses usually spread in planting material or in the mouths of small sucking insects. One common fungus disease on sweet potato causes the leaves to become wrinkled and twisted. It usually gets worse in old gardens and where soils are running out of nutrients. It doesn't affect all kinds of sweet potato to the same extent. The answer is not to stop the disease, but to improve the soil. The general rule is that healthy plants that are growing well will suffer less damage from disease.

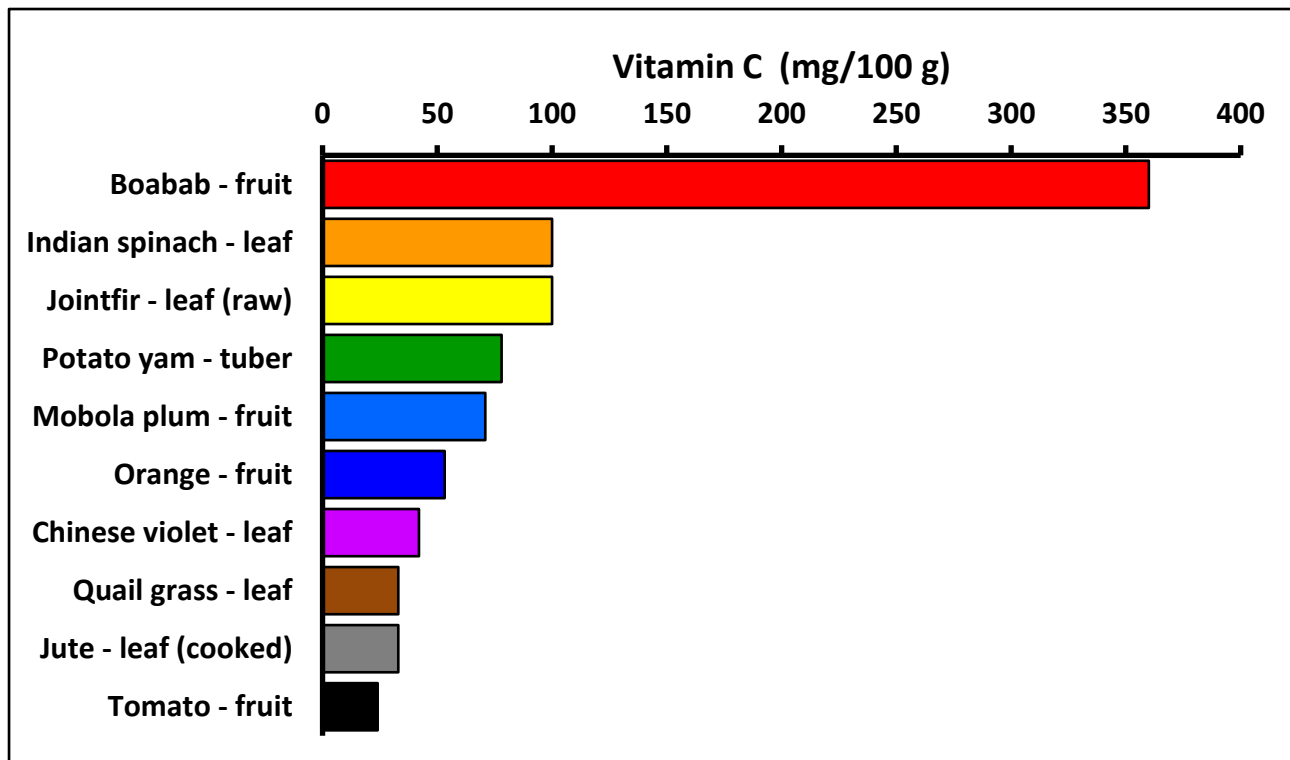
Food value charts for a selection of plants from Central African Republic



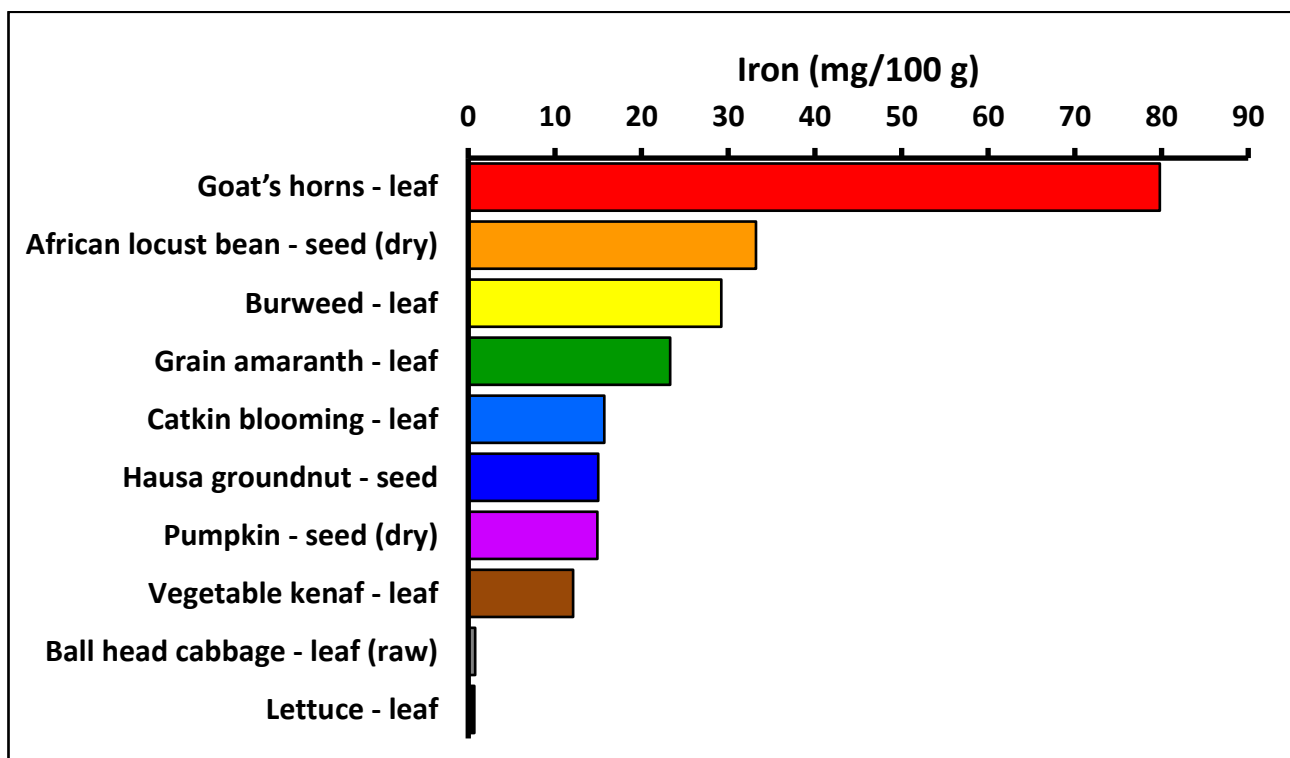
Protein helps the body repair cells and make new ones. Protein is also important for growth and development in children, teens, and pregnant women. Symptoms of protein deficiency include wasting and shrinkage of muscle tissue, and slow growth (in children).



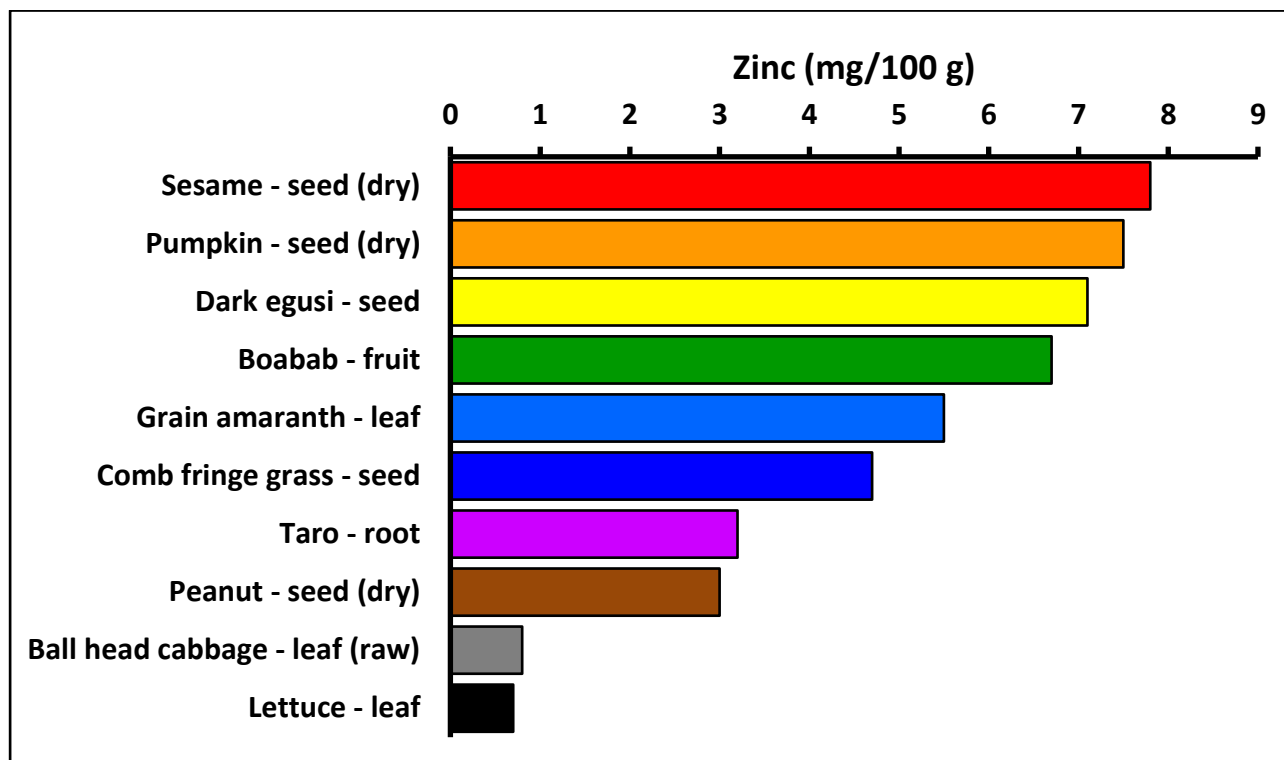
Vitamin A is very important for eyesight and fighting disease, particularly in infants, young children and pregnant women. People who are short of Vitamin A have trouble seeing at night.



Vitamin C helps us avoid sickness, heal wounds, prevent infections and absorb iron from food. Severe vitamin C deficiency increases the risk of scurvy with symptoms such as inflammation of the gums, scaly skin, nosebleed and painful joints.



Iron is important because it helps red blood cells carry oxygen from the lungs to the rest of the body. Low levels of iron cause anaemia, which makes us feel fatigued. Iron is also important to maintain healthy cells, skin, hair and nails. Iron is more available when Vitamin C is also present.



Zinc is particularly important for the health of young children and teenagers, and to help recovery from illness. It is needed for the body's immune system to work properly. It plays a role in cell division, cell growth, wound healing, and the breakdown of carbohydrates. Zinc is also needed for the senses of smell and taste. Zinc deficiency is characterized by stunted growth, loss of appetite, and impaired immune function.

Note regarding plant selection: In compiling these field guides, we acknowledge that some staple foods and commercial crops which are grown widely in the target country may be omitted. Such foods are often in the starchy staple category (e.g. rice, corn). This does not mean that they are not useful, but merely reflects a desire for the Food Plant Solutions project to concentrate on plants that are less well known and/or underutilised.

Starchy staples

English: Taro

Local:

Scientific name: *Colocasia esculenta*

Plant family: ARACEAE

Description: This plant has large flat leaves on the end of upright leaf stalks. It grows up to 1 m high. The leaf stalk or petiole joins the leaf towards the centre of the leaf. The leaves are 20-50 cm long. Near the ground a thickened rounded corm is produced. Around this plant there is normally a ring of small plants called suckers. Many different varieties occur. If left to maturity, a lily type flower is produced in the centre of the plant. It has a spathe 15-30 cm long which is rolled inwards. The flowers are yellow and fused along the stalk. There are many named cultivated varieties. Taro comes in two basic forms. The Dasheen type *Colocasia esculenta* var. *esculenta* and *Colocasia esculenta* var. *antiquorum* or the Eddoe type. The basic difference is the adaptation of the Eddoe type to storage and survival in seasonally dry places, while the dasheen type needs to be maintained in a more or less continuously growing vegetative stage.



Distribution: It is a tropical plant. Taro grows from sea level up to about 2300 m altitude in the tropics. It grows well in humid places. It can stand damp soil and grow under light shade. It suits hardiness zones 9-12.

Use: The corms, petioles and leaves are all edible after cooking. The leaves are also dried and stored. Fresh leaves can be stored for 4-5 days. **Caution:** Some varieties burn the throat due to oxalate crystals.

Cultivation: Taro can be planted from cormels or from the top of the central corm. Other sections of the corm could also be used but this is not commonly done. Flowering of taro and seed production can lead to new cultivars. Flowering can be promoted by the use of gibberellic acid. The general growth pattern is for an increase in top growth, in terms of leaf number, leaf area and petiole length, to continue for about 6 months under tropical lowland conditions then for each of these to decrease and tuber storage to continue to increase. Corm weight increases significantly from 5-11 months. Starch content also increases with time but protein content declines over the corm development period.

Taro can be grown under flooded conditions but root rots develop if the water becomes stagnant. For flooded cultivation, the land is cleared, ploughed, cultivated and puddled. The aim is to get a field that is flat with embankments allowing the impounding of water. Planting is done into 2-5 cm of standing water.

For dryland taro, the soil is prepared by digging, unless a fresh bush fallow is used where the natural friability of the soil allows plants to be put into the undug soil in a small hole that is prepared. Plants are put into a hole 5-7 cm deep or deeper. Mulching to conserve moisture and reduce weed growth is beneficial. Setts from corms normally give higher yield than that from cormels. The greater leaf area and root production may be responsible for this. Setts of about 150 g are optimum.

The time of planting is primarily determined by the availability of moisture. Planting is done shortly after the rainfall has become regular, if seasonally distinct wet and dry occur. Higher rainfall, higher temperatures, and higher hours of sunlight, enhance production and determine seasonality of production.

Evapotranspiration for flooded taro averages about 4 mm per day, ranging from 1.5-7.2 mm, with a total of about 1200 mm for the crop. Intermittent moisture can result in irregular shaped corms. Flooding has been found to be more effective than sprinkler irrigation, or furrow irrigation. Increased suckering, giving greater leaf area, seems to be the reason for this.

Taro is sensitive to weed competition throughout most of its growth, but it is more critical during early growth up to 3-4 months. About 7-9 weedings are required, to keep the crop clean under tropical lowland conditions, where flooding is not used. Due to the decrease in height and leaf area towards the end of the growth cycle when starch accumulation in the corms is maximum, weed competition and weed control are again significant. Mechanical weeding needs to be shallow to avoid damaging the superficial taro roots. A range of herbicides have been recommended in various situations.

Taro produces the highest dry matter yield under full sunlight, but it can still grow under moderate shade. Under shaded conditions it grows more slowly and develops fewer cormels. They require good moisture conditions and have little tolerance for drought. Taro residue has an allelopathic factor which can reduce the germination and growth of other plants, for example, beans.

Taro tends to demand high fertility, and is responsive to additional NPK fertiliser. Higher doses of K increases starch content and higher doses of N increases protein content. Both N and K applications increase oxalic acid content of the tubers.

Spacing affects total yield, and marketable, harvestable yield, of corms. Close spacing increases the corm yield per area, and the shoot yield per area, but decreases the corm yield per plant, and the contribution of sucker corms, to the yield. Where spacings of 30 cm x 30 cm are used, giving about 110,000 plants per hectare, a very large amount of planting material is required, which reduces the net return per unit of planting material. A spacing of 60 cm x 60 cm is more common. Wider spacings of 90 cm x 90 cm reduces overall yield.

Production: Crops mature in 6-18 months. Yields of 5-15 tonnes per hectare are probably average.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
root	66.8	1231	1.96	3	5	0.68	3.2
leaf	85.0	210	5.0	57	90	0.62	0.7
leaf stalk	93.0	101	0.5	180	13	0.9	-
leaf (cooked)	92.2	100	2.7	424	35.5	1.2	0.2

Starchy staples

English: Cassava

Local:

Scientific name: *Manihot esculenta*

Plant family: EUPHORBIACEAE

Description: A plant which can re-grow year after year from the thickened roots. It has several stems. The stems are woody and have some branches. Plants grow up to 3 metres tall. Stalks have distinct scars where leaves have fallen. The leaves tend to be near the ends of branches. The leaves are divided like the fingers on a hand. The leaves have long leaf stalks. The leaves have 3-7 long lobes which can be 20 cm long. These are widest about 1/3 of the distance from the tip and taper towards the base. The colour varies. It produces several long tubers. These can be 50 cm long by 10 cm across. The flowers are on short stalks around a central stalk. They are produced near the ends of branches. The female flowers are near the base of the flower stalk and the male flowers higher up.



Distribution: A tropical plant. Plants grow from sea level up to about 1650 m. In Fiji they grow to 900 m. They can grow in poor soil and can survive drought. It is native to tropical America. It grows between 25°N and 25°S and needs a rainfall above 750 mm. It suits hardiness zones 10-12.

Use: The tubers are eaten after thorough cooking. They are boiled, roasted or made into flour. The starch is used in puddings, soups and dumplings. Young leaves are edible after cooking. They are also sometimes dried and stored. Seeds are also eaten. **Caution:** Bitter kinds of cassava contain poison but this is destroyed on heating. This kind of cassava should be cooked, sun dried, soaked and cooked again.

Cultivation: Cassava is planted from sections of the stalk. Sections about 15-20 cm long of the more mature woody stem are cut and stuck into the ground. They can be completely buried or put at almost any angle and it affects the growth little. Soon roots form and leaves start to sprout from the stalk. Cassava seeds need a soil temperature of 30°C for their germination. Flower and fruit production is more common under lower temperatures such as in highland or less equatorial conditions.

It is not necessary to dig a hole to plant cassava and on many soils where the soil is loose it can be planted without digging the soil first. Cassava does not suit waterlogged soils and preferably they should not be too shallow or stony.

Cassava can be planted at any time of the year but to get started it needs moisture so is often planted near the beginning of the wet season. The crop once established can survive for several months without rain. The ability to tolerate drought varies significantly with cultivar. During drought less and smaller leaves are produced and leaves die off more quickly but storage roots can be increased in the short term.

Because cassava can still grow satisfactorily in poorer soils it is often put last in a rotation after others crops have already been grown on the piece of land. Cassava is more responsive to nitrogen

and potassium than phosphorus under many field situations. Nitrogen can increase cyanide levels. Under very acid conditions with high soluble aluminium levels, cassava has been able to achieve and maintain top growth but with significantly reduced root yields. When drainage is good and soil moisture is adequate, cassava stalks can be planted at any orientation from horizontal to vertical, but in very sandy soils horizontal planting is best and in heavy clay soils vertical planting is best.

Because of the slow growth in early establishment stages, soil loss from erosion with heavy rains can be significant. To avoid this planting should be timed so that the maximum vegetative growth is occurring during the heaviest rains. A leaf area index between 2.5-3.5 is optimal for cassava yield. The critical period for weed control is the time from 2-8 weeks after planting. Cassava tuber bulking is delayed under shaded conditions. Yields are also reduced. In mixed cropping situations using crops which mature early, allowing the cassava time to recover, is one possible strategy. For optimum production shading should be avoided.

Cassava takes about 10-12 months to produce mature tubers in the lowlands tropics although some varieties produce a smaller yield earlier. Yields in the range of 20-45 t/ha have been recorded for 12-14 month crops. The plants can be left growing and the tubers stored in the soil for considerable time. Crops of 24 months duration occur. Once the tubers have been dug they do not keep for more than a few days. Pre-harvest pruning of plants increases the storage time of tubers after harvest.

Spacing and plant density varies with soil climatic conditions and variety. Plant densities from 10000 to 30000 plants per hectare are used. Plants from the higher density crops have been shown to have quick post-harvest deterioration. Mulching has given significant yield increases in some conditions. It also reduces the incidence and damage of some root boring insects.

Production: Plants can be harvested after 10 months in the lowlands. There are some faster growing varieties. Yields in the range of 20-45 t/ha have been recorded for 12-14 month crops.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
tuber	62.8	625	1.4	30	15	0.23	0.48
leaf	82.0	382	7.1	57	275	7.6	-

Starchy staples

English: Pumpkin

Local:

Scientific name: *Cucurbita moschata*

Plant family: CUCURBITACEAE

Description: A pumpkin family plant. It is a creeping plant with long creeping stems and softly hairy but without prickly hairs. The stems are rounded or 5 angled and moderately hard. They can grow 15-20 m long. The leaves are large and shallowly lobed and divided like fingers on a hand. Occasionally the leaves have white blotches. They have rounded lobes. They are 20 cm by 30 cm. The leaf stalk is 12-30 cm long. The flowers have male and female flowers separately on the same plant. The fruit stalk is distinctly expanded where it joins the fruit.



The fruit are not hard shelled and are dull in colour. The flesh is yellow and often has fibres through it. The seeds are plump and white to brown. They separate easily from the pulp of the fruit. The edge of the seed is scalloped and irregular in outline. There are a large number of cultivated varieties.

Distribution: A tropical plant that suits the wet tropics. It will thrive in humid as well as in very hot climates. A temperature of 18-30°C is best. It can tolerate some shade. It can grow in soils with a pH of 5.5-6.9. It suits hardiness zones 8-11.

Use: The fruit are eaten cooked. They are boiled, fried or baked. They can be mashed and used in pies, soups, bread and cakes. They can be dried, ground into flour and used for bread. The young leaves and flowers are edible. They can also be dried and stored. The seeds are eaten roasted. They can also be roasted in salt.

Cultivation: Plants are grown from seed. Seeds can be put in a nursery and transplanted.

Production: Fruit mature in 70-180 days after sowing depending on variety.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
seed	5.5	2331	23.4	-	-	2.8	-
leaf	93.6	88	3.0	95	10	2.1	-
fruit	95.0	35	0.7	-	14	0.4	-

Starchy staples

Common name: African bitter yam

Local:

Scientific name: *Dioscorea dumetorum*

Plant family: DIOSCOREACEAE

Description: A climbing yam plant. It can be 10 m long. The vine twines left or clockwise. The vine is robust and has prickles near the base. The leaf has 3 leaflets. The flowers are small and round. Sometimes it forms bulbils or small aerial yams along the stem. Underground the tubers are usually fused together to form a cluster. Some wild forms are very poisonous. The tubers vary in shape and colour. There is often a main tuber with deep lobes then small tubers around it. They are near the soil surface and 3-7 cm across. The flesh can be white, pale yellow or dark yellow.



Distribution: A tropical plant that is native to tropical Africa. It grows between 15°N and 15°S. It grows on the edges of forests and along river banks. It occurs between 500 m and 1400 m altitude.

Use: The tuber is boiled, peeled, sliced, pounded, and steeped in running (preferably salt) water then dried. It is also used to make an alcoholic drink. **Caution:** Some forms are poisonous. They must be processed before being used.

Cultivation: Plants are grown from setts or section of the tubers. Sections of the vine can be used.

Production: A crop takes 8-10 months to mature. Tubers are collected soon after the rainy season finishes.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
tuber	67	520	3.2	-	-	-	-

Image sourced from:

http://www.eastafricanplants.senckenberg.de/root/index.php?page_id=47&id=579#image=7780

Starchy staples

Common name: Comb fringe grass

Local:

Scientific name: *Dactyloctenium aegyptium*

Plant family: POACEAE

Description: An annual grass. The stems are slender. They can lie along the ground. These can form roots at the nodes. They can have runners and form mats. It is 15-60 cm high. The edges of the leaf sheaths have small hairs. The leaf blades are flat and 5-20 cm long by 0.2-0.6 cm wide. The surfaces are lumpy/hairy. It tapers to the tip. The flowers spread like fingers on a hand. There are 2-9 flower stalks. They are long and narrow. They often spread out horizontally. The spikes are on one side of the stalk. The tip is bare. The seed grains are about 1 mm across.



Distribution: A tropical plant. It grows in disturbed weedy places especially on sandy soils in S China. It grows in tropical to warm temperate regions. It grows on clayey, sandy or black soil along the borders of ponds, swamps and bogs. In West Africa it grows from sea level up to 2000 m altitude. It grows in alkaline and salty soils. It grows in areas with an annual rainfall between 100-1580 mm. It can grow in arid places.

Use: The seeds are husked then boiled into a porridge. They are also roasted in a hot pot to soften them. It is then pounded into flour and cooked into porridge. The rhizome or runners are eaten raw.

Cultivation: Plants can be grown from seeds.

Production: The seeds are collected during the dry season. The seeds can be stored for several months.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
seed	7.5	1234	9.8	-	-	6.9	4.7

Image sourced from: <https://www.feedipedia.org/node/465>

Starchy staples

English: Sorghum

Local:

Scientific name: *Sorghum bicolor*

Plant family: POACEAE

Description: Sorghum is a millet grass. A mature sorghum plant resembles maize in its stature. Plants vary in height from 45 cm to 4 m. It is an annual grass with erect solid stems. The stems can be 3 cm across at the base. Prop roots occur at the base of the plant. There are numerous sorghum varieties. Some have one main stem while others produce multiple tillers. More tillers are produced when plants are widely spaced. The nodes on the stem are slightly thickened. Short types have up to 7 leaves while tall late varieties may have up to 24 leaves. The leaf blade can be 30-135 cm long. Leaves are bluish green and waxy. They have a prominent midrib. The large flower panicle can be 20-40 cm long. The flower occurs at the top of the plant. It can stick upright or bend over. The flower can be open or compact. Over 1000 cultivated varieties occur in China.



Distribution: Sorghum is a tropical plant. It suits the savannah zones in the tropics and can tolerate heat and drought. It can recover from drought even as a seedling. It can tolerate water-logging. It can be grown on heavy or light soils. Sorghum requires short day lengths to flower. Many kinds are adapted to specific day length and rainfall patterns. It suits hardiness zones 9-12.

Use: Sorghum seeds are eaten as a cereal. Flour can be made from the grain and then used for porridge or other dishes. It is used for dumplings, fried cakes and drinks. It cannot be used for bread as it contains no gluten. The stems of some kinds are sweet and can be chewed. The grains can be popped and eaten. The sprouted seeds can also be eaten.

Cultivation: Sorghum seeds will germinate soon after harvest. The seeds also store well if kept dry and protected from insects.

Production: Grain is ready for harvest 4-8 weeks after flowering.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
seed	-	1459	11.1	-	-	-	-

Starchy staples

English: Bullrush millet

Local:

Scientific name: *Pennisetum glaucum*

Plant family: POACEAE

Description: An annual grass that grows to 3 m tall. The leaf blades are 20-100 cm long by 2-5 cm wide. The flower is dense and 40-50 cm long by 1.2-1.5 cm wide. They also vary in shape and size. Plants that tiller produce smaller heads. The species varies a lot. There are 13 cultivated, 15 weed and 6 wild races of this grass. It has a cylindrical ear like a bullrush. The grains are small and round and have a shiny grey colour like pearls. There are thousands of cultivated varieties.

Distribution: A tropical plant that suits regions with a short growing season. It grows in areas with less than 600 mm of rainfall. It is replaced with sorghum between 600-1200 mm rainfall and then by finger millet or maize above 1200 mm rainfall. It is important in the drier areas of India and Pakistan. It can grow in arid places.

Use: The seeds are eaten like rice. They are also ground into flour and made into bread and cakes. They are used to make alcoholic drinks. They are mixed with other grains and seeds to make fermented foods. Some kinds have sweet stalks that are chewed. The young ears can be roasted and eaten like sweet corn.

Cultivation: Plants are grown from seed. It is usually sown directly into the field. The plant density is adjusted to suit rainfall and soil fertility. The spacing is 45 cm apart up to 200 cm apart. It is also intercropped with other crops such as cowpea, sorghum and peanut. Crops are normally weeded 2 or 3 times.

Production: It takes from 75-180 days to maturity. The heads can be picked by hand or the plant removed. Some types need to be picked 2 or 3 times as heads mature.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
seed	11.6	1442	10.5	-	-	6.5	1.7



Starchy staples

English: Potato yam

Local:

Scientific name: *Dioscorea bulbifera*

Plant family: DIOSCOREACEAE

Description: A yam with a long smooth stemmed vine, round in cross section and without spines. The vine winds to the left, can climb into trees and grow to long lengths. The large leaves (14-30 cm across and slightly longer than wide) have pointed tips and round bases. About 7 veins arise from the tip of the leaf stalk. It produces often flattened bulbils (potatoes) in the leaf angles along the vine. They can be grey brown or purple. The smaller tuber underground is normally covered with roots. The flowers are large. The male flowers are in spikes up to 20 cm long. The female spikes are usually in pairs. The winged fruit are about 2.5 cm long by 1.5 cm across. The seeds have wings. The bulbils normally have few fibres through the tissue compared to some yam tubers. Many varieties have yellow flesh.



Distribution: An annual tropical plant. It will grow from the coast up to about 1700 m altitude in equatorial zones. It is common near the edge of grassland and forest at mid altitudes. Both wild and cultivated forms occur. It is common near secondary forest at low and medium altitudes.

Use: The cooked tubers aerial bulbils are eaten. Some kinds are bitter and inedible or at least require special processing and cooking. Some varieties are poisonous.

Cultivation: Either the vine bulbils or the underground tubers are planted. The long vines can be trained up trees. The bulbils need a set storage time before sprouting. The leaves die off for 1-4 months each year before re-sprouting from the tuber. Bulbils only grow shoots from one end unless the bulbil is cut into pieces. If larger bulbils are cut, the cut surfaces should be dried and healed in a shady place for 2-3 days before planting. Bulbils are planted 8-12 cm below ground at a spacing of about 100 cm by 100 cm. Nitrogen and potassium fertilisers give greater responses than phosphorus. Friable well drained soils are most suitable. Often little cultivation or mounding is done. A high level of organic matter improves yield. Strong staking is required with branched 2 m stakes, or with trees or living stakes. Vine and tuber growth can be extensive and heavy.

Production: Bulbils or aerial yams are produced as leaves begin to unfold, continue until plant maturity, and often fall. Harvesting can start 3 months after planting but immature tubers have less starch. Underground tubers are normally not harvested until leaf die back. Wounds and damage to the tubers normally heal naturally given dry aerated conditions. Some varieties have seasonally dormant aerial tubers which only grow after an extended storage period. Others germinate quickly.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
tuber	70.8	357	2.7	-	78	3.1	0.4
bulbil	79.4	326	1.4	-	-	2.0	-

Legumes

English: Pigeon pea

Local:

Scientific name: *Cajanus cajan*

Plant family: FABACEAE

Description: An upright perennial shrubby legume that can live for 3-4 years. They can grow up to 4 m tall and spread to 1.5 m wide. It has a bushy appearance and a strong deep taproot. The root nodules are round and sometimes lobed. The leaf consists of 3 narrow, green leaflets which are silvery-green underneath. The end leaflet is larger with a longer leaf stalk. The pea shaped flowers are red and yellow and occur on branched flower stalks which stick upwards in the axils of leaves. Pods are long, straight and narrow, often with 4-8 seeds. Seeds vary in shape, size and colour. The pods are slightly hairy. Pods are often 4-8 cm long and have a beak at the end. Pods are constricted between the seeds. Many varieties of pigeon pea occur. Some are dwarf and day length neutral.



Distribution: A tropical plant that requires a tropical or subtropical climate. Plants grow from sea level up to about 1800 m in the tropics. They can tolerate drought and are suited to a drier climate. They can grow in places with less than 600 mm rainfall per year. They do less well in the wet tropics. They suffer in waterlogged soils and are damaged by frost. It can also tolerate heat. It will grow on poor soils cannot grow on salty soils. It can grow in arid places and suits hardiness zones 10-12.

Use: Young leaves, shoots and pods are eaten. The pods can be used in curries. The leaves and shoots as potherbs. Young seeds are cooked and eaten like peas. Ripe seeds are also cooked and eaten in soups and curries. Bean sprouts can be produced and eaten. Preparation of the seeds for dahl is somewhat complicated.

Cultivation: They are grown from seeds. It is best to sow seeds where the plants are to grow. Seeds normally germinate easily and well. Before sowing seed it helps to soak them in cold water for one day. Seeds store well if kept cool and dry. A spacing of 1.5 m x 1.5 m is suitable. Plants can be cut back and allowed to re-grow. Plants can also be grown from cuttings.

Production: Plants are fast growing. Pods are ready after 5 months. Mature seeds take about 8 months. Plants will often live for 3-4 years. Plants are cross pollinated by insects, or self pollinated.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
seed	10.0	1449	19.5	55	-	15.0	-
pod (young)	64.4	477	8.7	-	-	2.0	-
seed (young, boiled)	71.8	464	6.0	2	28.1	1.6	0.8

Legumes

English: Lablab bean

Local:

Scientific name: *Lablab purpureus*

Plant family: FABACEAE

Description: A climbing bean which can have vines 1-5 m long. It keeps growing from year to year. The stems can be smooth or hairy. Leaves are made up of 3 almost triangular leaflets. The leaflets are 5-15 cm long and 3-14 cm wide. The side leaflets are somewhat asymmetrical. Often the plants are flushed purple. The flowering clusters are 5-20 cm long. Flowers are often white but can vary from red to blue. The pods are flattened, pointed and up to 12 cm long and 2 cm wide. They can be green, purple or white. Inside there are 3-5 white or dark seeds. Seed pods have a wavy margin. The seeds are 0.5-1.5 cm long. (This bean is similar to Lima bean but the keel of the flower is not spirally twisted, the pod ends more bluntly with a long thin style at the end and the hilum on the seed is longer.)



Distribution: It is a tropical and subtropical plant. It mostly grows between 750 and 2175 m altitude in the tropics. It is drought resistant and can grow in quite low rainfall areas. Some varieties are short day and some are long day kinds. It suits hardiness zones 9-12.

Use: The young pods, ripe seeds and young leaves are edible, cooked. Flowers can be eaten raw, steamed or added to soups and stews. Dried seeds can be cooked as a vegetable. The seeds can also be sprouted then crushed and cooked. The large starchy root is edible. **Caution:** Many types can be poisonous. They should be boiled and the cooking water thrown away.

Cultivation: Seeds are sown at 30 x 60 cm spacing near stakes or trees. About 20 kg of seed per hectare are required. Fertilising with nitrogen and potash until flowering is recommended.

Production: Young pods are ready 4-6 months after planting and seeds 6-8 months. Pods are often harvested over 2 or 3 years. Pollination and seed setting are reduced in cold weather.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
seed (dry)	10.0	1428	22.8	-	-	9.0	-
seed (young)	86.9	209	3.0	14	5.1	0.8	0.4
pod (fresh)	86.7	203	3.9	-	1.0	2.4	-

Legumes

English: African locust bean

Local:

Scientific name: *Parkia filicoidea*

Plant family: FABACEAE

Description: A deciduous tree that grows up to 35 m tall. It has a spreading flat crown. The trunk has small rounded buttresses. The grey to yellow-brown bark can be scaly or smooth, and becomes dark and cracked with age. The bark has an orange coloured resin. The leaves are feathery. A leaf is made up of 6-9 pairs of leaflets each divided into 16-24 pairs of smaller leaflets. These are about 2 cm long and 5-8 mm wide. The flowers are small and in bright red club shaped heads. These hang down on stalks 30 cm long. The flower heads are up to 8 cm long. The fruit are dark brown to purple pods which hang down in clusters. They are 30-60 cm long and 2 cm wide with their stalk. The pod is narrowed slightly between the seeds. The seeds are red-brown in a dry, mealy, edible, yellow pulp.



Distribution: A tropical and subtropical tree of lowland rainforests. It grows in Africa in forests near streams. It occurs in sub-humid and humid places with an annual rainfall of 950-1750 mm annually. It grows from 250-1370 m above sea level. It can grow in arid places.

Use: The pods and the pulp are eaten. The seeds are boiled and fermented then eaten. This has a strong smell but is removed by frying or roasting. The seeds can also be powdered and used for flavouring soups and rice dishes. The leaves are cooked as used as a vegetable.

Cultivation: Plants can be grown from seed. The pod is crushed and the seed removed from the pulp. The seed they should be boiled briefly, then allowed to cool and soaked for 12 hours, before sowing.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
seed (dry)	7.0	1780	32.3	-	6	33.2	-
fruit	13.2	1263	3.4	-	-	3.6	-

Image accessed from:

http://www.westafricanplants.senckenberg.de/images/pictures/fabmimo_parkia_filicoidea_cbch_6118_4049_b8ed36.jpg

Legumes

English: Lima bean

Local:

Scientific name: *Phaseolus lunatus*

Plant family: FABACEAE

Description: A perennial climbing bean. It is often a tall, vigorously climbing plant which can keep growing for some years. The leaves are slightly rounded at the base and pointed at the tip. The flower is white or yellow. The keel of the flower is twisted which helps tell the difference between this bean and Lablab bean. The pods are long (10 cm), flattened and curved and have 3-4 seeds which are highly variable in colour. The seeds are large. The seeds have a short round hilum where the seed is attached to the pod. The seeds also have lines going out from this point across the bean seed.



Distribution: It suits warm and subtropical areas. In the tropics it is common from 500-2100 m altitude but grows to the limit of cultivation (2700 m). For germination it must have a soil temperature above 15.5°C and cannot withstand frost. In very hot weather seeds often do not set. It does best in a temperature range 14-21°C. It is sensitive to a pH less than 6. It can grow in arid places.

Use: The leaves, young pods and seeds are all eaten. The seeds are eaten fresh or after drying. They are also fried in oil. Dried beans are boiled or baked. They can be used in soups and stews. The seeds are sometimes grown as bean sprouts then cooked and eaten. **Caution:** Some kinds have poison (hydrocyanic acid). This is destroyed by thorough cooking. The beans contain a protein inhibitor but this is also destroyed by cooking.

Cultivation: It is grown from seed. Coloured seeds are often hard to get to grow but white seeded kinds start growing easily. Sow 3-4 seeds in a hill and put a stick 2-3 m tall in the middle. Hills should be about 1 m apart. Seeds should be 2-4 cm deep.

Production: Harvesting can begin after about 100 days. Dried beans can be stored for several months. Yields of 0.12 kg of seed per square metre have been obtained. The yield of pods can be 1 kg per square metre.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
seed	12.0	1407	19.8	-	-	5.6	-
seed (young, cooked)	67.2	515	6.8	37	10.1	2.5	0.8
seed (young, raw)	70.2	473	6.8	30	23.4	3.1	0.8

Legumes

English: Hausa groundnut

Local:

Scientific name: *Macrotyloma geocarpum*

Plant family: FABACEAE

Description: An annual herb. The 10 cm long stems lie along the ground and form roots. The leaves are alternate and have 3 leaflets. The leaf stalk is erect and 25 cm long. The leaflets are 3-8 cm long by 2-2.5 cm wide. The flowers can be single or in pairs in the axils of leaves. The flowers are greenish white. The fruit are pods 0.5-2.5 cm long by 0.5-1 cm wide. These are forced into the ground as they develop. The pods contain 1 to 3 kidney shaped beans. The seeds are 5-10 mm long by 4-7 mm wide.



Distribution: A tropical plant that can grow in arid places. It grows in the drier regions of West Africa.

Use: The seeds are cooked and eaten. They are boiled with salt and eaten with palm oil. They are also boiled in soup. Dried seeds are ground into flour and made into cakes and other dishes. The leaves are also cooked and eaten.

Cultivation: Plants are grown from seeds. Plants are often intercropped.

Production: Pods are harvested and then dried in the sun. The seeds are then thrashed from the pods. Yields of dry seeds can be 500 kg per hectare.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
seed	9.0	1461	19.4	-	-	15.0	-

Image sourced from: https://storage.googleapis.com/powop-assets/PPA/1275_1299/h1285f_fullsize.jpg

Legumes

English: Bambara groundnut

Local:

Scientific name: *Vigna subterranea*

Plant family: FABACEAE

Description: An annual plant that can be either a bunchy bush or a trailing plant. Often the creeping stems are near ground level. It often appears as if bunched leaves arise from branched stems near ground level. It has a well-developed taproot. The leaves have 3 leaflets. The leaf stalk is erect and thickened near the base. The end leaflet is slightly larger than the side leaflets. Leaflets are about 6 cm long by 3 cm across. The flowers are yellowish-white and occur in pairs. The flower/fruit stalk elongates after being fertilised and pushes into the soil. The fruit are pods which are round and have one seed. Some kinds have 3 seeds. This pod develops under the ground on a long stalk. The seeds are hard and are of many colours. Pods can be 3.7 cm long.



Distribution: It is a tropical plant that can grow in hot climates. It can also grow on poor soils. It does best with moderate rainfall and sunshine. It can tolerate drought. Long day-lengths can reduce or prevent pod development in some kinds.

Use: Seeds can be eaten fresh or roasted while immature. Mature seeds are hard so must be boiled before being used in cooking. Seeds can be dried and made into flour and used for baking. They can be popped like corn. The seeds are roasted as a coffee substitute. Young pods are cooked and used as a vegetable or in stews. The leaves can be eaten.

Cultivation: Plants are grown from seed. Plants are often put in rows 50 cm apart and with 15 cm spacing between plants. Ridges are formed to enable the pods to penetrate the soil. It is mostly grown intercropped with other plants. Soil should be light and friable and the seed bed loose and fine. Normally the whole plant is pulled up for harvesting. Any pods which become detached are harvested by hand. Pods are dried in the air before threshing.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
seed	7.3	1572	18.4	-	-	4.6	2.2
seed (boiled)	66.4	578	7.7	-	-	1.4	1.1

Legumes

English: Soybean

Local:

Scientific name: *Glycine max*

Plant family: FABACEAE

Description: A small erect bean growing up to 60 cm tall. It grows each year from seed. Straggling kinds can occur. Stems, leaves and pods are softly hairy. The leaves have 3 leaflets. The leaflets have stalks. Flowers are small and white or blue. They occur in groups in the axils of leaves. The pods are broad, flat and hairy. Pods have 2-4 seeds. The seeds can be yellow to black.



Distribution: It is a temperate plant that suits lowland areas. It can be grown from sea level to 2000 m altitude. Many varieties will not flower in the tropics (short days). It needs fertile soil. The best soil acidity is pH 5.5-7.0. It is damaged by frost.

Use: The young pods and ripe seeds are eaten. They are used for flour. The dried seeds are boiled or baked and used in soups, stews and casseroles. The seeds are used for oil. Toasted seeds are eaten like a snack. Strongly roasted seeds are used for coffee. Soy flour is used for noodles, and confectionary. The beans are fermented and used in a range of foods. Sometimes the young leaves are eaten. The seeds are also used for sprouts and for making cooking oil and soya sauce etc. Because soybean contains a trypsin inhibitor they should be cooked and even the sprouts should be lightly cooked.

Cultivation: It is grown from seed. Seeds need to be inoculated with bacteria before planting. Plants need to be about 20 cm apart.

Production: Plants flower about 8 weeks after sowing and pods mature about 16 weeks after sowing. Often plants are pulled up and hung up before threshing out the seed.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
seed	9.0	1701	33.7	55	-	6.1	-
seed (immature)	68.0	584	13.0	16	27	3.8	0.9
sprout	79.5	339	8.5	1.0	8.3	1.3	1.0

Leafy greens

English: Grain amaranth

Local:

Scientific name: *Amaranthus caudatus*

Plant family: AMARANTHACEAE

Description: An annual plant which can be 2 m high and 45 cm across. The stems are angular and it can have a single stem or be branched. It is often limp in the upper parts. Plants are hairy at first but become smooth. Often they are tinged purple. Leaves are 2-4 cm long by 0.7-1.6 cm wide on a leaf stalk 0.5-1.5 cm long. Leaves can taper to a tip at the end. They can also thin towards the base. The veins are pale underneath. The flower clusters are in spikes on the side or top branches. The flowers are sometimes branched and can droop over. They can be 45 cm long. The fruit is oval. Seed are 1-1.3 mm across.



Distribution: A tropical plant. It can grow in warm temperate places. It cannot tolerate frost. Plants do best under high light, warm conditions and dry conditions. They need a well-drained soil. Some varieties can tolerate pH up to 8.5 and there is some salt tolerance. It can grow in arid places. It suits hardiness zones 8-11.

Use: The leaves and young plant are eaten cooked. They are also used in stir fries and added to soups. The seeds are ground into flour and used to make bread. **Caution:** This plant can accumulate nitrates if grown with high nitrogen inorganic fertilisers and these are poisonous.

Cultivation: Plants can be grown from seed if the soil is warm. Seeds are small and grow easily. Cuttings of growing plants root easily. Amaranths are mostly grown from seeds. The seeds are collected from a mature dry seed head of an old plant. These dry flower stalks are stored and then the flowers rubbed between the hands over the garden site. Collecting the seeds is fairly easy by banging flower heads on a mat or piece of cloth then the rubbish can be blown out of this mixture by dropping it and blowing gently as it falls. The very small seeds of these plants are scattered over the ashes or fine soil in fertile ground. Some types are self-sown.

Amaranthus seeds are very small. A thousand seeds weigh about 0.3 g. It is very difficult to sow such small seeds evenly over the ground. So there are a few different methods you can use to try and get the plants well-spaced. One way is to mix the seeds with some sand and then when you sprinkle this along a row it will only contain a few seeds among the sand. The other way is to throw the seeds over a small plot of ground which will be a nursery. After 2 or 3 weeks the seedlings can be transplanted into the garden bed where they are to grow. If the seeds are just scattered over the garden, the small seedlings can be thinned out and either eaten or transplanted to a different spot. Seedlings are transplanted when about 5-7 cm tall. Plants can be harvested when small by thinning out and either transplanted or eaten cooked. Plants can be harvested whole or have top leaves harvested several times. Harvesting begins after 4-7 weeks and can continue over 2 months.

A spacing of about 8 cm x 8 cm is used if the plants are to be harvested by pulling up the whole plant. If the harvesting is to be done by picking off the top leaves, a wider spacing is normally used.

When the tops are picked out 3 or 4 times over the life of the one plant, a spacing of about 30 cm x 30 cm is used.

As far as producing a large amount of food is concerned, the spacing is not very important. Having between 200 and 1000 plants per square metre gives about the same total amount of food. The main thing that varies is the size of the leaves. Mostly people like larger leaves so a wider spacing of 8 cm to 10 cm for plants to be pulled out is suitable. For plants to be harvested by picking out the tops, they can be picked down to about 15 cm high. Picking lower makes the plant flower later, but it also recovers more slowly from picking.

Amaranths grow quickly. Seedlings come up above the ground in 3-5 days. They are 5-7 cm high and big enough for transplanting after about 20 days. The plants can be pulled out and used after 6 weeks. If they are harvested by picking out the tops, this can be started at 5-7 weeks and continued 3-4 times over the next 2 months.

Amaranths eventually stop producing leaves and grow flowers. Flowering occurs after about 3 months and seed can be recollected about a month later. Amaranths are called day-length neutral plants because they still produce flowers at about the same stage, irrespective of whether there are many or few hours of daylight. Because flowering stops harvesting of leaves, it is a problem, but there does not seem to be any easy way of slowing down flowering. Flowering can be delayed a little by picking out the tops down to a lower level. Also it is made a little later if plants are grown in the shade. But lower picking and growing in the shade mean the plants produce less food, so there is no point. Plants need to be harvested and used when they are ready. If plants are left growing the amount of harvestable leaf gets less and the quality gets poorer.

Nitrogen deficiency shows as the oldest leaves near the bottom of the plant going yellow. This is because the plant needs more nitrogen to grow more new leaves at the top and there is not enough nitrogen in the soil for it to get it from there. So it reuses the nitrogen it used in the oldest leaves. These leaves therefore go yellow. Potassium deficiency shows as the edges of the oldest leaves going yellow. These shortages of nutrients could be corrected by adding some nitrogen or potash fertiliser but it is most likely too late for the current crop.

Production: Plants take 4-6 months from sowing to harvesting the seed, but up to 10 months in some Andean highland regions. Yields from 1-5 tonnes per hectare of seed are common. Yields of up to one kilogram of edible leaves have been harvested by pulling out plants from an area of one square metre. The young leaves or whole plants are eaten cooked. If plants are picked 3 or 4 times over 6-8 weeks then two kilograms of edible leaves can be harvested. From a plant that grows so quickly and is such good quality food this is a very high production.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
leaf	6.0	1034	28.8	33	-	23.3	5.5
seed			13				

Leafy greens

English: Chinese violet

Local:

Scientific name: *Asystasia gangetica*

Plant family: ACANTHACEAE

Description: An erect herb that can clamber over other objects. It keeps growing from year to year, but can also be grown each year from seed. It grows 60-100 cm tall. The leaves are oval or heart shaped and 3-6 cm long. The flowers are bell-shaped with lobes which flare out. They are usually light violet with a light yellow throat, but can be all yellow. They occur in spikes and are 3-5 cm wide. The fruit is a capsule that splits open. It is cylinder-shaped and 2.5 cm long.



Distribution: It is a tropical plant that grows in the lowlands. It grows naturally in India and Malaysia and probably East Africa. It prefers moderate moisture but can tolerate dry periods. It can grow in full sun or light shade. It suits hardiness zones 9-12.

Use: The leaves are used as a pot-herb or stir-fried. They are added to fish and meat stews. The leaves are also dried and stored.

Cultivation: It can be grown from seed, layering of the stems or cuttings.

Production: It is fast growing. The leaves are harvested by plucking.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
leaf	82.6	234	3.7	-	42	4.7	-

Leafy greens

English: Indian spinach

Local:

Scientific name: *Basella alba*

Plant family: BASELLACEAE

Description: An annual or perennial climbing herb with thick fleshy leaves. The vine is smooth and juicy and can be 10 m long. It branches freely. The vine and leaves can be red or green. The leaves are fleshy and pointed at the tip. They can be 8-18 cm long and 8-10 cm across. They are carried alternately along the vine. Leaves can be heart shaped or oval. It has white, pink or red flowers in short spikes which are in the axils of the leaves. The fruit are round and soft. They can be red, white or black and are 6-8 mm across. The seeds are round and black.



They are 3 mm across. (Often the ones with heart shaped leaves are called *Basella cordifolia*, the ones with a red stem *Basella rubra* and the short day flowering dark green kind *Basella alba*.)

Distribution: A tropical plant. It occurs mostly in the tropical lowlands and is best below 500 m but will grow up to about 1600 m. in the equatorial tropics. It will grow quite well in the temperature range 15-35°C. It does not like water-logging but can survive 4-12 weeks drought once well established. It requires adequate water during the growing season. The best pH is 5.5-7.0. It cannot tolerate salty conditions. Flowering does not occur when day lengths are over 13 hours.

Use: The young shoots and leaves are eaten cooked. They are somewhat slimy. In soups and stews the mucilage can be used as thickening. The purple colour of fruit is harmless and is used to colour vegetables and agar-agar. Some lemon juice added to the dye enhances the colour. The leaves can be eaten raw in salads or cooked like a vegetable. The leaves are used to make tea and can also be dried and stored. The seeds can be crushed to use as an edible dye for jellies.

Cultivation: It can be sown from seeds or cuttings. Seeds germinate in a few days. Sticks can be provided for support, or it can grow over fences and stumps. If seeds are used, 3 kg of seed will sow one hectare. They are best sown in a nursery and transplanted. A spacing of 1 m is suitable. Plants grown from seed are more productive than those grown from cuttings. When cuttings are used, 20-25 cm long cuttings are suitable. Where the plant grows over light soil it can root at the nodes and continue growing. Partial shade, rich fertile soil and adequate moisture favour abundant leaf production. It is responsive to nitrogen fertiliser. Light shade gives bigger leaves. It requires a trellis to climb over. Frequently picking of the bud encourages branching.

Production: It is 4-6 weeks until the first harvest. It grows reasonably well on poor soils and is fairly resistant to pest and disease. Leaves will only store for one day at 20-30°C. Yields of 40 kg of leaves from a 10 metre square bed is possible over 75 days.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
leaf	85.0	202	5.0	56	100	4.0	-

Leafy greens

English: Quail grass

Local:

Scientific name: *Celosia argentea*

Plant family: AMARANTHACEAE

Description: An erect short lived annual herb that grows up to 1 m tall. The leaves are alternate and light green, and 2 cm wide by 6 cm long. They are dark green and longer on the flowering shoots. The 20 cm long flower spike grows on the end of the main stem and is red or purple. The seeds are small (1 mm across). Two kinds occur as red and green forms.



Distribution: It is a tropical plant that grows well in the lowland humid forest zone. It suits damp, humid places and is often on clay soil. The plant is widespread as a wild plant at low altitudes.. Temperatures of 25-30°C at night and 30-35°C in the day are best. It needs good sunlight and does best in soils with high organic matter. It can grow in light shade and in dry conditions. It can grow in arid places.

Use: The tender leaves and young flowers are cooked and eaten as a vegetable. It is best eaten before flowering. The dried leaves can be added to wheat flour and cooked. They are used in soups, sauces and stews. An edible oil can be extracted from the seeds. The red colouring from the flowers can be used to colour lamb stew.

Cultivation: The plant can be grown by seeds. The seeds are very small so can be mixed with sand to allow more even distribution. The seed are broadcast then mulched with dry grass, which is removed once the seeds have germinated. Seedlings do not transplant easily. They can be transplanted after 2-3 weeks. It is good for inter-cropping amongst other vegetables. These plants are often grown as ornamentals.

Production: Harvesting of leaves can commence about 4-5 weeks after planting. Tops can be cut off over a period of 3-5 months. It grows slowly at first, therefore repeated picking of tips gives better production than harvesting whole small plants.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
leaf	84.0	185	4.7	-	33	7.8	-

Leafy greens

English: Silver spinach

Local:

Scientific name: *Celosia trigyna*

Plant family: AMARANTHACEAE

Description: A branched and straggling herb that grows 25-120 cm tall. The lower leaves have long leaf stalks. The plant looks like *Amaranthus hybridus* until it starts to flower. Where the leaf stalk joins the stem there is a pair of small moon-shaped leaflets that lie around the stem. The small white or silvery flowers are crowded together in separate clusters. The fruit is a capsule which is almost round and has several seeds.



Distribution: A tropical plant that grows in tropical lowlands and highlands in Africa. It is often along the coast but grows from sea level to 1960 m above sea level. It needs an annual rainfall of up to 2500 mm and an average temperature of 25-30°C. It cannot tolerate a temperature below 15°C. It grows best on fertile, well drained soils.

Use: The young shoots and leaves are cooked and eaten. They are finely cut and used in soups, stews and sauces. Because they can be bitter, they need extensive cooking or mixing with other foods.

Cultivation: Plants are grown from seeds which germinate in 4-5 days. It grows for 90-120 days. Because the seeds are small, they are best mixed with sand to give a more even distribution when sowing.

Production: Plants can be uprooted and harvested or leaves removed. Harvests of 4-5 t/ha can be achieved from weekly harvests over 2 months.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
leaf	89.0	139	2.7	94	10	5.0	-

Image accessed from <http://www.flickr.com/photos/36517976@N06/5063937939>

Leafy greens

English: Goat's horns

Local:

Scientific name: *Sida cordifolia*

Plant family: MALVACEAE

Description: An erect, woody shrub that grows about 0.4-1 m high. It keeps growing from year to year. It is covered with short and long hairs that make the plant feel soft. The leaf stalk is 1-2.5 cm long. The leaves are one after the other and heart shaped at the base. They are toothed at the edge and 1.5-4.5 cm long. The flowers are yellow and occur in the axils of the leaves. The fruit are about 6-8 mm across and have 20 fine bristles on the top.



Distribution: A tropical plant that grows in open waste places in the tropics and sub-tropics. It is common and widely distributed in the Philippines. It grows in hot arid places with a marked dry season. It grows in places with an annual rainfall below 520 mm. It grows in dry sandy soils and can grow in salty soils. It grows below 1100 m altitude. It can tolerate shade and can grow in arid places.

Use: The leaves are edible when cooked.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
leaf	6.6	1296	24.2	-	-	79.8	-

Image accessed from

[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f4/Sida_cordifolia \(Bala\) in Hyderabad, AP W IMG 9420.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f4/Sida_cordifolia_(Bala)_in_Hyderabad,_AP_W_IMG_9420.jpg)

Leafy greens

English: Burweed

Local:

Scientific name: *Triumfetta rhomboidea*

Plant family: MALVACEAE

Description: A herb or small shrub that keeps growing from year to year. Plants can be 1.5 m tall. The bark is tough and fibrous. The younger stems and leaves and flowers are densely covered with hairs. The leaves are alternate and the edges of the leaves have teeth. The lower leaves have 3 lobes. The flowers occur in small clusters opposite the axils of leaves. The stalks carrying the flowers are 20-40 cm long. There are 5 yellow petals. The fruit are brown and hairy and covered with hooked spines. They are round and about 5 mm across. They contain 2-4 seeds. The fruit cling to clothing.



Distribution: A tropical plant. It grows naturally in grassland and re-growth situations. It is more common in tropical places with seasonal rainfall. It grows in savannah woodland and in palm groves. It grows up to 1280 m above sea level. It can grow in arid places.

Use: It is eaten as a pot-herb in times of scarcity. The roots are eaten cooked.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
leaf	78.4	284	4.2	-	-	29.2	-

Image accessed from:

http://www.phytoimages.siu.edu/users/paraman1/2_15_10/Upload15Feb10/077TriumfettaRhomboidea.jpg

Leafy greens

English: Catkin blooming

Local:

Scientific name: *Opilia amentacea*

Plant family: OPILIACEAE

Description: A shrub or woody climber. It grows off other trees and plants. It grows to 4-10 m tall and has stems 20 cm across. The bark is rough and light grey. It has furrows along it and is corky. The aerial branches often hang downwards. The leaves are fairly smooth and leathery. They are 5-14 cm long by 2-5 cm wide. The midrib is prominent underneath the leaf. The leaf has a pointed tip. The leaf stalk is 0.3-0.7 cm long. The new leaves are bright shiny green. The base of the leaves is slightly curved backwards. The flowers are very small and yellow green. They are star shaped. They have a sweet scent. Many flowers occur together on short stalks around a central stem. These occur



in the axils of leaves and are 2-3.5 cm long. The white-fleshed, edible fruit can occur singly or in clusters and are oval and fleshy. They are 1.5-3 cm long by 1.2-1.8 cm wide. They are pale yellow or orange when ripe. They have one seed inside. The seed is 21 mm long by 15 mm wide.

Distribution: A tropical plant that grows in tropical Asia. They occur near the beach in monsoon areas. They are often on sandy soil. They need fresh water so are often near streams. It can grow in arid places.

Use: The fruit are eaten fresh. **Caution.** If eaten in large quantities, the fruit can irritate the lips and tongue. Leaves are cooked as a vegetable.

Cultivation: It can be grown from fresh seed. The seed need to be placed on the ground surface, not buried.

Production: It fruits in the wet season. In Tanzania, leaves are collected from April to November.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
leaf	9.2	-	14.8	-	3.9	15.7	3.2

Image accessed from:

http://www.westafricanplants.senckenberg.de/images/pictures/opil_opilia_amentacea_rvbli_4_1163_e5e841.jpg

Fruit

English: Boabab

Local:

Scientific name: *Adansonia digitata*

Plant family: BOMBACACEAE

Description: A large tree. It grows up to 25 m tall. It loses its leaves during the year. The branches are thick, angular and spread out wide. The trunk is short and stout and can be 10-14 m around. Often the trunk has deep grooves or is fluted. The bark is smooth and grey but can be rough and wrinkled. The leaves spread out like fingers on a hand. There are 5-9 leaflets. Often the leaves are crowded near the ends of branches. The flowers are large and 12-15 cm across. The petals are white and the stamens are purple. The fruit hangs singly on a long stalk. The fruit has a woody shell. This can be 20-30 cm long and 10 cm across. Inside the fruit are hard brown seeds. They are about 15 mm long. The seeds are in a yellow white floury pulp. The pulp is edible. The thick roots end in fattened tubers.



Distribution: It is a tropical plant that grows in the lowlands. It grows in the hot dry regions of tropical Africa, such as the Sahel. It survives well in dry climates. It grows where rainfall is 100-1000 mm a year. It can tolerate fire. It grows where the annual temperatures are 20-30°C. In most places it grows below 900 m altitude but occasionally grows to 1500 m altitude. It requires good drainage. It can grow in arid places and suits hardiness zones 11-12.

Use: The young leaves are eaten as a cooked vegetable. The dried leaves are also used to thicken soups. The fruit pulp is eaten raw. It is also used for a drink. The flowers are eaten raw or cooked. The seeds can be eaten fresh or dried and ground into flour then added to soups. They yield a cooking oil. The shoots of germinating seeds are eaten. The young tender roots are eaten. The fattened root tubers are cooked and eaten. The bark is eaten and the dried leaves are used as flavouring.

Cultivation: Trees are grown from seed. The seed remain viable for several years but before planting the seeds must be treated to break the hard seed coat, by soaking the seeds in hot water for several minutes or by cutting the seed coat. Seeds that float in water should not be used. Seeds can be planted in nurseries in plastic bags then transplanted after 6 months. Plants can also be grown from cuttings.

Production: Trees grow quickly reaching 2 m in 2 years. Trees produce fruit after 2-15 years. The plant is pollinated by bats, insects and winds. Trees can last 600 or more years. Fruit can be stored for about a year.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
nut (dry)	7.8	1832	33.7	-		13.9	-
fruit	16.0	1212	2.2	-	360	7.4	6.7
leaf	77.0	290	3.8	-	50	-	-

Fruit

Common name: Wild custard apple

Local:

Scientific name: *Annona senegalensis*

Plant family: ANNONACEAE

Description: A shrubby tree which loses its leaves during the year. It grows to 2-6 m high. The bark is grey and smooth. The young stems are hairy and orange. The older bark becomes thick and folded. It peels off to expose paler patches. The leaves are oval and blue-green. They are 18 cm long. They are curved like a spoon. Under the leaf is hairy. The leaves have a peculiar smell when crushed. The flowers are yellow green. They occur as one to three together hanging down below the twigs. The fruit is rounded and 2-7 cm across. It is smooth but divided like lots of small parts fused together. It is green when unripe and turns orange-yellow when ripe. It has a smell like a pineapple. It has many seeds. They are pale brown. The sweet pulp around the seeds is edible.



Distribution: A tropical plant. It grows in the lowlands. It is found throughout Africa. It grows in tropical and warm regions. It grows in semi-arid to sub humid regions. It grows in the Sahel. The young trees need light shade. They need well drained soil. It is a tree of the savannah regions. It grows in the lowlands. It is best with a temperature range of 17-30°C and a rainfall of 700-2500 mm per year. It can grow in arid places. It grows best with a pH of 5.5-7. In Malawi it grows below 1200 m altitude. In Kenya it grows from sea level to 1750 m above sea level.

Use: The flower buds are eaten. They are used in soups and as a flavouring. The flesh of the ripe fruit is eaten fresh. It has a pleasant taste. The leaves are edible cooked.

Cultivation: It is grown from fresh seeds. It is probably best to grow seedlings in a nursery and then to transplant them. Seed grow easily but not all at the same time. There are 2500-3000 seeds per kg. Seed can only be easily stored for 6 months. Plants can be cut back and allowed to re-grow. Plants can be grown by root suckers.

Production: Trees are slow growing. Trees flower from October to December in the southern hemisphere. The fruit is ready from January to March. Fruit mature in about 120 days. It is best to pick fruit before they ripen and to ripen them in a dark warm place.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
fruit	77.2	329	1.7	-	18.1	0.7	0.3

Image accessed from: <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/53/4c/92/534c927f13c6aaf559ea818da08bf153.jpg>

Fruit

English: Hybrid plantains

Local:

Scientific name: *Musa x paradisiaca*

Plant family: MUSACEAE

Description: These are the main group of cultivated bananas. They can be classed into diploid, triploid and tetraploid kinds with various amounts of the A or B parents. They grow 2-9 m tall. They are large non-woody herbs with broad long leaves. Most kinds have several suckers. Bananas grow a soft firm false stem from an underground corm. The fruiting stalk eventually emerges from the top of this false stem and normally curves over to point towards the ground. Fruit occur in clumps or hands along this stem. The male



flowers are in a red bud at the end of the flower stalk. The colour of the stem, bracts, bud and fruit varies considerably depending on the variety. The fruit can be 6-35 cm long depending on variety. They can also be 2.5-6 cm across.

Distribution: A tropical and subtropical plant that grows from sea level up to about 2000 m altitude in the tropics. They are rarely an important food above about 1,600 m. In Nepal they grow to about 1800 m altitude. They do best in warm and humid tropical climates. Temperatures need to be above 15°C. The best temperature is 27°C. The maximum growing temperature is 38°C. Bananas grow best in full sun. For best growth, a rainfall of 200-220 mm per month is needed. A deep friable soil is best. They can tolerate a pH of 4.5-7.5. It suits hardiness zones 10-12.

Use: Fruit are eaten raw or cooked depending on variety. Male buds and flowers are eaten on some varieties. They are cooked as a vegetable. The central pith of the false stem and the underground rhizome are also sometimes eaten. Although it has little food value, the corm can be boiled, dried and eaten with the false stem.

Cultivation: They are planted from sword suckers. Diploids need re-planting annually but many triploids can be re-suckered from the base on the same site. Spacing depends on variety. A population of 1000-3000 plants per hectare is used, depending on variety. Suckers are usually planted 30 cm deep.

Production: Time to maturity varies from 6-18 months depending on variety and altitude. Triploids have larger bunches than diploids. Tetraploids are very large plants.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
fruit (cooking)	65.3	510	2.0	113	18.4	0.6	0.1
Fruit (sweet)	70.7	337	1.1	200	10	0.4	0.2
stem	88.3	176	0.5	-	7	-	-
flower bud	91.3	109	1.6	-	-	1.0	-

Fruit

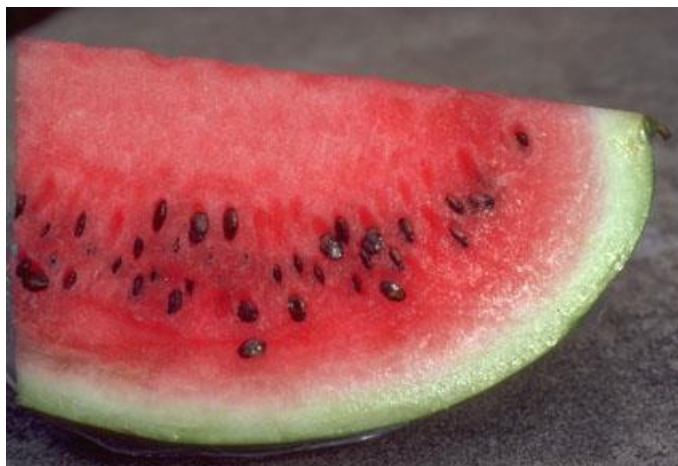
English: Watermelon

Local:

Scientific name: *Citrullus lanatus*

Plant family: CUCURBITACEAE

Description: An annual climber, with deeply divided leaves and tendrils along the vine. It trails over the ground and has hairy, angular stems. The leaves are on long leaf stalks. The leaves are deeply divided along their length. These leaf lobes are rounded and can themselves be divided. The leaves are 5-20 cm long by 2-12 cm across. The tendrils are divided. The plant has separate male and female flowers on the same plant. The flowers are pale yellow and smaller than pumpkin flowers. The flowers occur in the axils of leaves. The male flowers appear first.



Fruit are large and round or oval. They can be 60 cm long. Fruit have a hard smooth skin. Several fruit colours and shapes occur. They often have a dark green mottle, or blotches. The fruit has reddish, juicy flesh and black or red seeds. The seeds are oval-shaped and smooth.

Distribution: It grows in most tropical and subtropical countries. It grows best on the coast in the tropics, but will grow up to about 1000 m altitude. It will not stand water-logging and does well on sandy soils. Plants are frost-sensitive. Seed will not germinate below 21°C. Temperatures between 24-30°C are suitable. Fruit are sweeter in arid warm areas. It suits hardiness zones 10-12.

Use: The fruit is eaten raw when ripe. Small, unripe fruit can be cooked as a vegetable. The skin is sometimes candied in vinegar and eaten with fish. Seeds are also eaten. They are dried, soaked in salt water, then roasted. Oil is extracted from the seeds. Very young leaves are occasionally eaten. It is a popular fruit.

Cultivation: They are suitable mainly for the dry season. A spacing of 1.5-2 m is suitable. They grow easily from seed. They do best when fully exposed to the sun. Seed can be dried and stored. If too much vegetative growth occurs, picking out the tip to produce side branches will produce more fruit.

Production: Harvesting commences after 4-5 months. The main fruit season is November to January. The ripeness can be determined by tapping the fruit to get a dull sound. The part of the fruit on the ground changes from green to light yellow and the tendril near the base of the fruit becomes dry when ripe. Fruit yield can be 45-60 t/ha.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
fruit	94.0	92	0.4	20	5	0.3	0.1
seed	5.1	2330	28.3	0	0	7.3	10.2

Fruit

English: Orange

Local:

Scientific name: *Citrus sinensis*

Plant family: RUTACEAE

Description: An evergreen tree that grows 8-10 m tall and spreads to 4 m across. The stem is short, stout and spiny. It has a dense, rounded crown. The leaves are dark green, sword-shaped and taper towards the tip. They are 5-15 cm long. The leaves have a sweet smell when crushed. The leaf stalks have narrow wings and the stalk is jointed to the blade. The flowers are white and have a scent. The flowers have five petals and occur either singly or in clusters. The fruit often remain green in colour and don't turn orange when ripened below 600 m altitude in the tropics. The fruit are about 9 cm across. They have 10-14 segments.



Distribution: It grows in many Mediterranean climate and tropical countries. It is not suited to very wet areas, and not suited to high altitudes. It needs a well-drained, fertile, sandy soil. It is drought and frost sensitive. Trees need temperatures above 3-5°C to grow. Seeds won't start to grow below 13 °C. It suits hardiness zones 9-11.

Use: The fruit is eaten fresh, and the juice used in drinks. It is not of such great importance in the humid tropics.

Cultivation: Trees are often grown from seeds but these do not breed true. Seeds grow most easily between 27-32°C. It is better to use budded plants. Plants can also be grafted.

Production: Green fruit can be treated with ethylene to give an orange colour if people think an "orange" fruit is not supposed to have green colour.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
fruit	86.8	197	0.94	21	53.2	0.1	0.1

Fruit

English: Canteloupe

Local:

Scientific name: *Cucumis melo*

Plant family: CUCURBITACEAE

Description: A pumpkin family plant. It is an annual climber with tendrils. It grows to 0.5 m high and spreads to 1.5 m across. The stems are soft and hairy and often angled. The leaves have lobes and often a wavy or toothed edge. They are on long leaf stalks. The leaves are often hairy underneath. The tendrils are not branched. The flowers are yellow and funnel shaped with expanded lobes. The male flowers occur in clusters and are produced before the female flowers. The fruit is round, mostly with a rough or streaky skin. It is green or yellow inside. The fruit is edible. Different kinds of melons occur. Some have a hard, warty, scaly skin. Others have a network of fine ridges over the surface.



Distribution: A tropical plant, but not suited to places with high rainfall. It suits hot dry places with a fertile well drained soil. It needs a sheltered sunny position. It is drought and frost tender. A temperature range of 24-28°C is best but much higher temperatures are tolerated. Mostly they are grown below 500 m altitude in the tropics. A pH of 6-6.7 is best. Acid soils are not suitable. It can grow in arid places. It suits hardness zones 9-12.

Use: The ripe fruit are eaten raw. They are also dried, candied and made into jams, jellies and preserves. The seeds are sometimes eaten roasted. The seeds are blended with fruit juice to form a drink. Sometimes the immature fruit are cooked as a vegetable. The seeds contain an edible light oil. The young leaves are eaten as a potherb.

Cultivation: They are grown from seed planted about 1-4 cm deep. Plants need to be 1-2 m apart. Seedlings can be transplanted when about 10-15 cm high.

Production: Plants are ready 3-4 months after planting. Yields of 20 kg per 10 sq m is average.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
seed	7.0	2319	15.8	-	-	-	-
leaf	85.0	172	4.2	72	-	-	-
fruit	93.0	109	0.5	169	30	0.4	0.2

Fruit

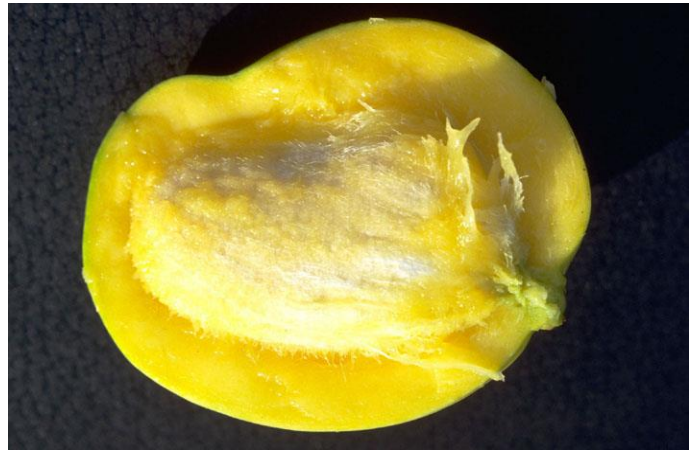
English: Mango

Local:

Scientific name: *Mangifera indica*

Plant family: ANACARDIACEAE

Description: An erect, branched evergreen tree. It can grow to 10-40 m high and is long lived. (Trees grown by vegetative means are smaller and more compact.) Trees spread to 15 m across. It has strong deep roots. The trunk is thick. The bark is greyish-brown. The leaves are simple and shaped like a spear. Some kinds of mangoes have leaves with a wavy edge. They can be 10-30 cm long and 2-10 cm wide. They are arranged in spirals. The leaf stalk is 1-10 cm long and flattened. Leaves are often brightly coloured and brownish-red when young. These tender leaves which are produced in flushes become stiff and dark-green when mature. The flower stalks are at the ends of branches. They are 10-50 cm long and branching. Up to 6000 flowers can occur on a stalk. Most of these are male and up to 35% have both male and female flower parts. Fruit are green, yellow or red and 2.5-30 cm long. The fruit hang down on long stalks. The outside layer of the seed is hard and fibrous and there is one seed inside. Several embryos can develop from one seed by asexual reproduction. The fruit shape and colour vary as well as the amount of fibre and the flavour. India has many varieties and they cannot tolerate humidity.



Distribution: A tropical and subtropical plant. It grows in the lowlands. It grows from sea level up to 1300 m altitude in the tropics. It does best in areas below 700 m and with a dry season. Rain and high humidity at flowering reduces fruit set. It thrives best where temperatures are about 25°C but will grow with temperatures from 10-42°C. Temperatures of 0°C will damage young trees and flowers. Low temperatures (10-20°C) at flowering time will reduce fruiting. As temperatures get lower due to latitude or altitude, fruit maturity is later and trees become more likely to only have good crops every second year. Mangoes can grow on a range of soils. In wetter areas soils with less clay are better. They can withstand occasional flooding. A soil pH of 5.5-6.5 is best. Soils with pH above 7.5 cause plants to develop iron deficiency. It grows in the Sahel. It can grow in arid places. It suits hardiness zones 11-12.

Use: Ripe fruit are eaten raw. Unripe fruit is pickled. Seeds can be eaten cooked. They are boiled or roasted. They are made into meal by powdering. Young leaves can be eaten raw or cooked. Amchur is made from the dried unripe fruit. This is used in curries, and pickles and chutneys. The seed kernels are used for famine food in India. They are boiled, roasted or soaked to remove the bitterness. **Caution:** The sap from the tree or fruit can cause skin problems with some people.

Cultivation: Trees are grown by planting fresh seed and they can be transplanted. Mangoes vary in their ability to breed true from seed. When more than one seedling emerges from the seed some of these are asexual and breed true. Clean seed germinate best if they are treated at 50°C for 20 minutes, then planted on their edge with the round bulge upwards and near the soil surface. The husk around the seed should be removed. Seeds germinate in 3-6 weeks. The strongest growing seedlings from this seed are used and the others thrown away. The seedlings from the folds of the seed are vegetative while the seedling from the centre of the seedling near the stalk end may be sexual and show variation from type. Other seeds only produce one seedling and these normally

vary and can be different from the parent tree. Plants can be propagated by budding, or by grafting using in-arching. This is not easy and care is required. In wetter places, flowers need to be protected with fungicides to enable fruit to form. If organic manure is used this should not be directly in the planting hole nor immediately against the new plant. Young transplanted seedlings need regular watering. A spacing of 6-12 m between plants is used. Wind protection is advisable to prevent fruit rubbing and getting damaged. Trees should only ever be lightly pruned as fruit develop on new growth and heavy pruning can reduce flowering. Flowering can be brought about by foliar sprays of potassium nitrate.

Production: Seeds germinate after about 20 days. Seedling trees produce after 4-6 years and increase in production up to 20 years. Trees often bear better each second year. Rain at flowering reduces fruit setting. Fruiting is at the end of the year. Fruit take 4-5 months to mature. Fruit vary in weight from 200-1000 g. Trees can produce one million flowers but only 500 fruit. Trees last for many years.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
fruit	83.0	253	0.5	54	30	0.5	0.04
leaf	82.1	226	3.9	-	60	2.8	-

Fruit

English: Avocado

Local:

Scientific name: *Persea americana*

Plant family: LAURACEAE

Description: A small to medium sized tree that normally grows 8-10 m tall, but can reach 25 m. The leaf stalk is 1.5-5 cm long. Leaves are entire, oval and 5-40 cm long. Flowers are greenish, small and on the ends of branches. Clusters of flowers may contain 200-300 flowers. Normally only 1-3 fruit develop from each cluster. The fruit is round or pear shaped, and 7-20 cm long. The fruit are greenish-yellow with some red coloration. The fruit has greenish-yellow flesh and a large round seed. There are 3 named races-West Indian, Guatemalan and Mexican.



Distribution: A subtropical plant that grows from sea level up to 2250 m in the tropics. It cannot stand water-logging. Branches are easily damaged by wind. It needs a frost free location or where frosts are rare. West Indian varieties thrive in humid, tropical climates, freeze at or near 0°C and can stand some salinity. Mexican types come from dry subtropical plateaus and thrive in a Mediterranean climate. They are hardy to -7° C. They are salt sensitive, have the smallest fruits and the thinnest skin. The best daytime temperature is 25-33°C. Guatemalan types come from cool, high-altitude tropics and are hardy to -3° C. It does best with neutral or slightly acid and well aerated soil. Growth is disrupted when soil temperature is below 13°C. It needs high humidity at flowering and fruit set. It can grow in arid places.

Use: The fruit pulp is eaten raw or cooked. It is used in salads, soups, sandwiches, spreads, ice cream, and also in tortillas and wine. The fruit is mixed with sugar and water to make a drink. Oil is extracted from the flesh and is used in salad dressing. The leaves can be used for tea sweetened with sugarcane juice. Toasted leaves are used to season stews and bean dishes. **Caution:** Some people are allergic to avocado.

Cultivation: Plants are often grown from seed. Seeds remain viable for 2-3 weeks. Fresh seed held at 25°C day to 15°C night will germinate in 3 weeks. It is best to propagate vegetatively. Tip cuttings, layers and grafts can be used. Because different types have pollen at different times of day, a mixture of trees which have pollen and flowers receptive at different times gives best fruit set. Although trees will grow in shade, they need sun for fruiting. The leaves do not rot easily and can accumulate under trees. Other plants cannot be grown under avocado trees.

Production: Seedlings grow quickly and continuously in warm, moist conditions. Seedlings bear after 5-8 years. Grafted trees can fruit in 1-2 years. A good tree produces 400-600 fruit each year. A fruit can weigh 50 g-1 kg. In the subtropics, trees often produce 2 main flushes of fruit per year. From fruit set to maturity can take 6-12 months. Fruit ripen off the tree in 4-14 days. For the Mexican types, the fruit weigh less than 250 g and they ripen 6-8 months after flowering.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
fruit	74.4	805	1.8	480	11	0.7	0.4

Image accessed from:

[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/7d/Avocados_\(Persea_americana\)_ \(18159574242\).jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/7d/Avocados_(Persea_americana)_ (18159574242).jpg)

Vegetables

English: Okra

Local:

Scientific name: *Abelmoschus esculentus*

Plant family: MALVACEAE

Description: A tropical annual herb that grows erect, often with hairy stems. It mostly grows about 1 m tall but can be 3.5 m tall. It becomes woody at the base. The leaves have long stalks up to 30 cm long. Leaves vary in shape but are roughly heart shaped with lobes and teeth along the edge. Upper leaves are more deeply divided than lower ones. The flowers are yellow with red hearts. The fruits are green, long and ribbed. The seeds are 4-5 mm across. They are round and dark green.



Distribution: A tropical plant that suits the hot humid tropical lowlands but is unsuited to the highlands. It is very sensitive to frost. It can grow in salty soils. It grows best where temperatures are 20-36°C. It can grow well in dry climates with irrigation. It suits hot humid environments. It does best on well drained well manured soils but will grow on many soils. A soil pH of 5.5-7.0 is best.

Use: Pods are eaten cooked. They are slimy, but less so if fried. Dried powdered seeds can be used in soups as a thickener. They can also be pickled. Young leaves can be eaten cooked. They can be dried and stored. Flowers can also be eaten. Okra is frozen and canned. The seeds are roasted and used as a coffee substitute.

Cultivation: They are grown from seeds, which are easy to collect. They need high temperatures for germination (over 20°C) and a sunny position. Often seeds are soaked for 24 hours before sowing to give quick germination. Seeds are sown 1.5-2.5 cm deep with 2-3 seeds per hole. Later these are thinned out to one plant. Seeds can be sown in nurseries and plants transplanted. Pinching out the tops of plants when 30 cm high encourages branching. A spacing of about 90 x 45 cm is suitable. About 8-10 kg of seed are required for one hectare. Most kinds respond to fertiliser. Seeds do not breed true and can cross with other kinds of okra growing nearby. This is not normally a problem but simply means plants and fruit are not all the same.

Production: Plants maintain production if the fruits are harvested regularly. Plants are ready to harvest 8-10 weeks after sowing. Seed yields of 500-800 kg per hectare are recorded. Pod yields of 4-6 tonnes per hectare occur. It takes 2-4 months from sowing to harvest of young pods. Pods develop 5-10 days after flowering. Pod harvests can continue for 1-2 months. Leaving pods on the plants stops new pods developing.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
seed	9.2	1721	23.7	-	-	-	-
leaf	81.0	235	4.4	116	59	0.7	-
pod (fresh)	88.0	151	2.1	185	47	1.2	-
fruit (cooked)	90.0	134	1.9	58	16.3	0.5	0.6

Vegetables

English: Jute

Local:

Scientific name: *Corchorus olitorius*

Plant family: MALVACEAE

Description: An annual plant. It is upright, branching, and slightly woody. Plants vary in height, shape, leafiness and hairiness. Plants grown for leaves are usually only 30 cm tall. They also have many branches. Leaves are shiny and have leaf stalks. The leaves have teeth along the edge. The tips of the lowest leaves in each side, have long bristle like structures. Small clusters of yellow flowers grow in the axils of the leaves. The fruit are ridged capsules. They can be 7 cm long. These have partitions across them between the seeds. A ripe capsules contains 180-230 seeds. The seeds are dull grey and with four faces and one long point. Each seed has one pale line along it.



Distribution: A tropical plant. It is mostly coastal, below 250 m altitude. Temperatures of 22°-35°C are suitable. It can stand both drought (2-3 weeks) and water-logging, except when young. A well-drained soil is best. They require humus-rich soils. A soil pH of 5.5-7.0 is best, but they can grow in soils with pH up to 8.5. They also need adequate moisture for good leaf production. A rainfall of 1000 mm is suitable. A high relative humidity (80-90%) is best. It produces seeds when day lengths are short. It grows in most African and Asian countries.

Use: The young leaves and stem tops are eaten cooked. They are slimy unless fried. They are also used to make a thick soup. Leaves can be sun dried, pounded to flour, then stored for a long time.

Cultivation: Plants grow from seed, and they can be transplanted. Seeds are often broadcast into fine seed beds at the beginning of the wet season. Mixing the small seeds with sand makes it easier to sow them evenly. Often seeds are slow to start growing. This can be overcome by soaking them in hot water. A spacing of 20-30 cm between plants is suitable. For vigorous varieties this could be increased to 45-50 cm. Seeds are saved from pods for re-sowing.

Production: First leaves can be harvested after 5-6 weeks. Tips about 20-30 cm long are picked. Production of edible green tips, is not large. 7-8 kg of leaf tips can be harvested from 3-8 pickings over 3-4 months. Seeds can be collected after 13-15 weeks. If seeds of a particular variety are desired, it is necessary to grow these plants 16 m away from other plants, to avoid cross pollination. Seeds can be stored for 8-12 months in well-sealed jars.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
leaf (raw)	80.4	244	4.5	574	80	7.2	-
leaf (cooked)	87.2	155	3.4	156	33.0	3.1	0.8

Vegetables

English: Okinawan spinach

Local:

Scientific name: *Crassocephalum crepidioides*

Plant family: ASTERACEAE

Description: An upright, annual herb that grows to about 1 m tall. The stem is thick and soft. The leaves are alternate and 16-18 cm long. The leaves have lobes, with teeth around the edge. Sometimes the young leaves have a purple edge. The leaves often droop. The flower is yellow and reddish, and develops at the top, bending over at first, then becoming upright. Fluffy seed heads develop after flowering. The fruit is dark brown, with long, silky hairs at the end. The seeds blow in the wind.



Distribution: A tropical plant that is a common weed in Papua New Guinea from sea level to over 2,500 m. It is more common in wet areas and in garden sites. It grows in many other tropical countries. It prefers light shade.

Use: The young leaves are cooked as a vegetable. They have a sharp, but not bitter, taste. They are often eaten mixed with other foods. The leaves are blanched if used in salads. The leaves have a smell which does not disappear with cooking. The roots are eaten with chilli sauce or cooked in fish curry. They are also stir-fried. **Caution:** It contains some alkaloids that are possibly toxic.

Cultivation: It grows from seed and is often self-sown. Seedlings appear in about 9 days and can be transplanted when 8- 12 cm high. A spacing of 25 cm by 25 cm is suitable. Plants are topped when 20 cm high to increase branching. To collect seed, the entire bundle is pulled from the receptacle with one hand, and the hairs removed with the other hand, without letting them mix with the seed.

Production: The first leaf harvest can be made in 6-7 weeks. There can be 5-9 harvests over a 60 day period. Seed can be collected for re-sowing about 16 weeks after sowing.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
leaf	93.1	76	2.5	-	10	-	-

Vegetables

English: Pumpkin

Local:

Scientific name: *Cucurbita maxima*

Plant family: CUCURBITACEAE

Description: A pumpkin family plant. It is a creeping vine with tendrils. It is an annual plant. The stems are soft and round in cross section. The leaves are large and hang loose. They are dark green and kidney shaped. The edges of the leaves are entire. There are large nodes at the base of the leaf. The tendrils are fairly stout and are divided half way along their length into many branches. Male flowers are carried on long upright stalks. The 5 petals are united into a long yellow tube. The female flowers are larger



than the male and are fewer in number and carried on shorter stalks. The fruit varies in size, colour and patterns on the skin. They can be round, oval or flattened, with yellow, orange or green skin. The surface can be smooth or rough and warty. The flesh is yellow and edible. The seeds are in the centre. The seeds are white or brown. They are flattened but plump and have a slanting scar at the top. The seeds are edible. (*C. moschata* does not have hairy stems but has fruit with a thickened stalk near where it joins the fruit.) There are a large number of cultivated varieties.

Distribution: A subtropical plant that grows from sea level to 2400 m altitude. They need a fertile soil. *C. moschata* is better suited to coastal areas. They are frost sensitive but better suited to cooler areas than *C. moschata*. It can grow in arid places. It suits hardiness zones 8-11.

Use: The young leaf tips are eaten cooked. They can also be dried and stored. The fruit can be eaten cooked. They are baked, boiled, fried, steamed or mashed. They are used in pies and cakes. The seeds are edible, raw or roasted. They are also ground into a meal. The male flowers are eaten after removing the stamen and calyx.

Cultivation: They are grown from seed. Usually 2 or 3 seeds are planted together in a mound. The distance apart depends on the cultivar. Some kinds are better for leaf tips. It is good to save seed of adapted varieties.

Production: Fruit are ready for harvest after about 3-4 months. Seed can be saved from fruit for re-sowing, but as pumpkins cross-pollinate, different types become mixed.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
seed (dry)	6.9	2264	24.5	38	1.9	14.9	7.5
fruit	69.6	439	1.4	-	-	-	-
leaf	88.0	160	4.9	260	28	2.5	0.9
flower	88.7	107	1.4	173	14	0.8	0.1

Vegetables

English: Marrow

Local:

Scientific name: *Cucurbita pepo*

Plant family: CUCURBITACEAE

Description: A bristly hairy annual vine in the pumpkin family. It has branched tendrils. The stems are angular and prickly. The leaves are roughly triangular. The leaves have 5 lobes which are pointed at the end and are toothed around the edge. Male and female plants are separate on the same plant. Male flowers are carried on long grooved flower stalks. Female flowers are borne on shorter more angular stalks. The fruit stalks have furrows along them but are not fattened near the stalk. The fruit vary in shape, size and colour. Often they are oval and yellow and 20 cm long by 15 cm wide. The seeds are smaller than pumpkin and easy to separate from the tissue. The scar at their tip is rounded or horizontal, not oblique. There are a large number of cultivated varieties.



Distribution: A subtropical plant. They are more suited to drier areas. They are frost sensitive, and grow best with day temperatures between 24-29°C and night temperatures of 16-24°C. It suits tropical highland regions. It suits hardiness zones 8-11.

Use: The young fruit are cooked and eaten. They can be steamed, boiled or fried. They are used in pies, soups, stews and cakes. The young leaves and the ripe seeds can also be eaten cooked. The seeds are dried, salted and toasted and eaten as a snack food. The seeds can also be pressed to produce oil. The sprouted seeds are used in salads. Flowers and flower buds can be eaten boiled. They can be dried for later use.

Cultivation: They are grown from seeds. The seeds germinate after one week. They can be grown from cuttings. They are best planted on mounds. A spacing of 2-3 m between plants is needed. Hand pollination assists fruit setting. Plants can also be grown from cuttings as plants root at the nodes.

Production: The first usable immature fruit are ready 7-8 weeks after planting.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
seed (dry)	3.7	2266	29.4	-	-	7.3	-
leaf	89.0	113	4.0	180	80	0.8	-
fruit (mature)	92.0	105	1.6	17	16	2.4	-
fruit	91.3	102	1.1	-	12	0.8	0.2
yellow fruit	92.0	97	1.0	180	8	1.4	-
immature fruit (raw)	92.0	92	1.5	-	9	0.4	0.1

Vegetables

English: Jointfir

Local:

Scientific name: *Gnetum buchholzianum*

Plant family: GNETACEAE

Description: An evergreen, climbing plant. The stems can be 10-15 m long. The branches are thickened at the nodes. The leaves are opposite but each pair is at right angles to the next one. They can be in rings of three. The leaf blade is narrowly oval and 8-15 cm long by 4.8 cm wide. The base is rounded and they taper to the tip. The leaves are dark green above and paler underneath. They have 4-8 pairs of strongly curved veins. The flowers are in a spike in the axils of leaves or near the ends of branches. The flowers are of separate sexes. The seeds are narrowly oval and 10-15 mm long by 4-8 mm wide. They have a fleshy covering. They turn orange or red when ripe.



Distribution: A tropical plant that grows in rainforest from sea level to 1200 m altitude. It suits humid locations. It does best with a rainfall of 3000 mm per year. It needs shade and plants do not grow well in full sun.

Use: The leaves are eaten raw or cooked. They are also added to sauces. The fruit and seeds are eaten. The leaves can be shredded and dried and stored for later use.

Cultivation: Plants can be grown from seed but may take one year to germinate. Leafy stem cuttings can also be used. Plants need a framework to climb on, and preferably a tree to provide shade.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
leaf (raw)	69.8	432	6.0	-	100	5.6	-

Image sourced from:

[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/98/Melinjo_\(Gnetum_gnemon\)_\(6863727669\).jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/98/Melinjo_(Gnetum_gnemon)_(6863727669).jpg)

Vegetables

English: Vegetable kenaf

Local:

Scientific name: *Hibiscus cannabinus*

Plant family: MALVACEAE

Description: A herb that can grow from seed each year, or keep growing from year to year. It grows up to 3.5 m tall. It has a few sharp spines. The leaf stalk is 6-20 cm long. The leaf blade has 2 forms. The leaves lower on the stem are heart shaped and those higher on the stem have 4-7 lobes arranged like fingers on a hand. These lobes are sword shaped and 2-12 cm long by 0.6-2 cm wide. They have teeth around the edge and taper at the tip. The flowers are yellow, white or ivory and red at the base. They occur singly in the axils of leaves. They are large and up to 10 cm across. They have very short stalks. The fruit is a capsule about 1.5 cm across. The seeds are kidney shaped.



Distribution: A tropical plant. It is cultivated in South China. It can grow in well-drained sandy soils and in dry but seasonally waterlogged places. It grows from 1500-2100 m above sea level. It grows in areas with an annual rainfall of 500-635 mm. It can grow in arid places and suits hardiness zones 10-12. It grows in many African and Asian countries.

Use: The leaves are eaten cooked as a vegetable. They are also used as a substitute for tamarind for curries. They are used in soups. The leaves are cooked with the aid of potashes. The seeds are roasted and eaten. They are also fermented. The seeds yield an edible oil. The flowers are eaten cooked as a vegetable. The bark is sweet and is chewed by children.

Cultivation: It is usually grown from seeds but can be grown from cuttings. Seeds will last for about 8 months. Seeds germinate best at 35°C.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
seed (dry)	8.1	1785	20.2	-	-	-	-
leaf	79.0	280	5.5	34	-	12.1	-

Vegetables

English: Horseradish tree

Local:

Scientific name: *Moringa oleifera*

Plant family: MORINGACEAE

Description: A small, soft-wooded tree that grows 9-12 m tall. The tree loses its leaves during the year. The bark is grey, thick, corky and peels off in patches. The leaves are pale green and the leaf is divided 3 times. The whole leaf is 30-60 cm long and the leaflets are usually oval and 1-2 cm long. The leaflets are jointed with a gland near the joint. The flowers are pale yellow. They occur in long sprays 30 cm long. Each flower has 5 petals and of these one is erect and 4 are bent backwards. The fruit is a long capsule 30-100 cm long by 2 cm wide. The seed capsules are up to 45 cm long. They are roughly triangular in shape. The seeds have 3 wings. Often the fruiting kinds are grown as annual plants.



Distribution: A tropical and subtropical plant. They suit the dry lowland areas and grow up to 1350 m altitude in the tropics. They are not hardy to frost. They cannot tolerate water-logging. A pH of 6-7.5 is suitable. It can grow in arid places. It suits hardiness zones 9-12.

Use: The young tops and leaves are eaten cooked. They are eaten as potherbs or used in soups and curries. They can be dried and stored for later use. The very young long pods are eaten cooked, especially in curries and soup. They are also pickled. The young seeds are eaten roasted or fried. Sometimes the roots are used as a horseradish substitute. A gum from the bark is used as seasoning. The bark is used for tea. The roots, leaves, flowers and fruits are eaten cooked in water and mixed with salt and chili peppers. The oil expressed from the seeds is used in salads.

Cultivation: It is best to grow plants from 1 metre long cuttings but they can be grown from seed. They can be used as a hedge and pruned regularly to produce more leaves. Properly dried seed can be stored for a long time in sealed containers in a cool place. Normally perennial types are grown from cuttings and annual types are grown from seed.

Production: Trees are fast growing. They can be pruned or topped. With one variety the tree flowers and fruits continuously while with the other variety there are flowers and fruit once per year. The fruit ripens 3 months after flowering. Annual types produce fruit 6 months after planting. Leaves are best dried in the shade to retain more of their Vitamin A.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
leaf	76.4	302	5.0	197	165	3.6	-
flower	84.2	205	3.3	-	-	5.2	-
leaf (boiled)	87	189	4.7	40	31.0	2.0	0.2
pod (raw)	88.2	155	2.1	7	141	0.4	0.5
seed	6.5	-	46.6	-	-	-	-

Nuts, seeds, herbs and other foods

English: Peanut

Local:

Scientific name: *Arachis hypogea*

Plant family: FABACEAE

Description: Peanuts grow on spreading bushy plants up to about 40 cm high. The leaves are made up of 2 pairs of oppositely arranged leaflets. Flowers are produced in the axils of the leaves. Two main kinds of peanuts occur. The runner kind (Virginia peanut) has a vegetative or leafy branch between each fruiting branch and therefore produces a spreading bush. The bunch type (Spanish-Valencia peanuts) produces fruiting branches in a sequence one after the other along the branches. They grow as a more upright plant and grow more quickly. Pods are produced on long stalks which extend under the ground and they contain between 2-6 seeds. The stalk or peg from the flower grows down into the soil and then produces the pod and seed under the ground. The flowers need to be no more than 18 cm from the soil surface for the seed pod to develop underground.



Distribution: Peanuts grow in tropical and subtropical areas. They grow well from sea level up to about 1,650 metres in the equatorial tropics. They require temperatures of 24-33°C. Plants are killed by frost. They need a well-drained soil and cannot stand water-logging and often require raised garden beds. Peanuts need 300-500 mm of rain during the growing season. Dry weather is needed near harvest.

Use: The seeds can be eaten raw, cooked or sprouted. They are boiled, steamed, roasted, salted or made into peanut butter or flour. The young leaves and unripe pods are edible after cooking. An edible oil is extracted from the seeds. The remaining meal can also be eaten.

Cultivation: Peanuts require soil with good levels of calcium and boron or they produce empty pods. Peanuts have nitrogen fixing root nodule bacteria and therefore can give good yields in soils where nitrogen is low. The nuts are normally removed from the shell before planting and are sown 2-3 cm deep, with 10 cm between plants and 60-80 cm between rows. The soil needs to be weeded and loose by the time the flowers are produced to allow the peg for the seed pods to penetrate the soil.

Production: Flowering can commence in 30 days and it takes 3.5-5 months until maturity. Peanuts are harvested by pulling out the plant when the top of the plants die down. After harvesting, they should be left to dry in the sun for 3-4 days. Virginia peanuts have a longer growing season and the seeds need to be stored for 30 days before they will start to re-grow.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
seed (dry)	4.5	2364	24.3	-	-	2.0	3.0
seed (fresh)	45	1394	15	-	10	1.5	-
leaf	78.5	228	4.4	-	-	4.2	-

Nuts, seeds, herbs and other foods

English: African walnut

Local:

Scientific name: *Coula edulis*

Plant family: OLACACEAE

Description: A tree that grows to 30 m tall with a trunk to 1 m across. The branches are often spreading. The leaves are simple and alternate. They are 10-25 cm long by 4-10 cm wide and end in a point. The flowers are in rusty haired clusters. The fruit is round and 3-4 cm across. The fruit is fleshy with a stone inside. This has one seed.

Distribution: A tropical plant. It grows in the hot, humid tropical lowlands. It tolerates moderate shade.



Use: The seeds are eaten fresh and also boiled or roasted. They are also fermented and used as flavouring.

Cultivation: Plants are grown from seeds.

Production: In Sierra Leone, trees flower from February to May and fruit are produced from November to February.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
nut (dry)	8.3	1935	7.2	-	-	-	-

Image sourced from:

http://tropical.theferns.info/plantimages/sized/d/0/d0aa59c4215f3210d3177192936262addb5d388b_480px.jpg

Nuts, seeds, herbs and other foods

English: Dark egusi

Local:

Scientific name: *Cucumeropsis mannii*

Plant family: CUCURBITACEAE

Description: A pumpkin family plant, like a cucumber, that lies along the ground. The vines can be 5 m or more long. The leaves are 9-18 cm long and 7-15 cm wide, alternate and simple. They are heart shaped at the base and have 3-5 lobes arranged like fingers on a hand. There are teeth around the edge. The flowers are yellow and are of separate sexes. The male flowers are in groups in the axils of leaves and female flowers occur singly. The fruit are about 25 cm long and 8 cm across. They are pale yellow and have many oval and flattened seeds. They are 1-2 cm long by 0.5-1 cm wide and are smooth and white.



Distribution: A tropical plant that grows in forests in tropical Africa. It grows up to 1150 m altitude.

Use: The seeds are parched and pounded to remove the seed coat. The kernels are crushed and added to soups and stews. The seeds are roasted and eaten as a snack. The flesh of the fruit is edible but not commonly used.

Cultivation: Plants are grown from seed. Often 3-4 seeds are planted in a hole. The seedlings appear within 6-8 days. It is often intercropped and allowed to climb stakes.

Production: Fruit are collected when the stems have dried and the fruit have changed from green to pale yellow or white. Seed yields can be 300-900 kg per hectare. After harvest, fruit are cracked or split open and allowed to rot for 14-20 days to help remove the seed from the pulp. (This creates a smell so is done away from houses.) The seeds are washed and covered with sand to prevent sticking. They are then dried and stored.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
seed	8.3	2278	26.2	-	-	6.1	7.1

Nuts, seeds, herbs and other foods

English: Doum palm

Local:

Scientific name: *Hyphaene thebaica*

Plant family: ARECACEAE

Description: A tall, branched palm that grows 15-20 m tall. There are usually 4 crowns, but occasionally 8 or 16. Each branch gives rise to a crown. Each crown has 8-20 fan shaped leaves. The stem is smooth but it has the scars of the old leaf bases. The leaves are broad (130-180 cm) and with 20-40 long, thin segments. The leaves are grey-green. The leaf stalk is 90-140 cm long and spiny with curved hooks along the edges. The male flower is 1.3 m long and the female flower is a similar length, but is densely furry in the axils at the base of the fruit. The fruit is a dry fruit with a stone inside. They are about 7.5 x 5 cm and usually an irregular shape. The shiny outer layer encloses a middle layer which smells of gingerbread. This surrounds the hard stone which contains the seed kernel. The seeds are very hard and with a white kernel and a hollow centre. About 20-50 seeds weigh one kilogram. The mealy flesh of the fruit is edible.



Distribution: A tropical plant that grows in warm temperate, subtropical and tropical regions. It will not tolerate frost. It grows in coastal regions and can grow in arid places. It is found in the drier parts of West Africa and in the Sahel. It often grows on soil left by river floods. It forms dense stands in hot dry valleys. They grow where the temperature is 20-40°C and up to 600 m altitude. They are common in areas with a rainfall between 150 and 600 mm per year. A soil pH of 6.5-7.6 is preferred. They can grow on saline soils and suit hardiness zones 10-12. They are pollinated by wind.

Use: The spongy middle layer of the fruit is used for flour. The kernel is eaten. The seed kernels are sprouted in soil then eaten. The shoot from the developing seed before leaves emerge can be eaten. The young fruit are boiled and eaten. The palm cabbage is edible. The sap from the growing point can be drunk fresh or made into wine. The trunk contains a kind of sago starch which is edible.

Cultivation: Plants are grown from seed. Sometimes suckers are used. Seed should either be sown in a deep container or direct in the field. The seeds take a long time to germinate.

Production: The first harvest occurs after 6-8 years. Fruit ripen in 8-12 months. A tree lasts for about 60 years. Tapping the tree for sap kills the palm.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
nuts (dry)	6.0	1651	3.9	-	-	-	-
fruit starch	10.7	1237	2.6	-	-	-	-

Nuts, seeds, herbs and other foods

English: African wild mango

Local:

Scientific name: *Irvingia gabonensis*

Plant family: IRVINGIACEAE

Description: A tree that grows to 40 m high. The trunk grows to 1 m across. It has narrow buttresses. The bark is light grey and smooth. The leaves are simple and alternate, and are 3.5-16 cm long and 2-8 cm wide. The yellowish-green scented flowers are small and occur among the leaves. The fruit are 10-13 cm long and 3-4 cm wide. The fruit has a thick covering and one seed.

Distribution: A tropical plant that grows in the humid forest zone in central Africa. It grows below 1000 m altitude. It grows in areas with a rainfall of 1500-3000 mm per year and temperatures of 25-32°C.



Use: The seed provides oil used in cooking. It is used to make Gabon chocolate or Dika bread. The kernels are ground and eaten in dishes of mixed vegetables. The kernels are extracted from the stones then roasted. They are then pounded and poured into a mould. This cheese is then scraped and added to boiling meat or vegetables. It is like a relish, especially for plantain bananas. The pulp of the fruit is eaten fresh.

Cultivation: Plants are grown from seed that germinate in about 14 days. It can be grown from stem cuttings under mist. Plants can also be budded.

Production: Young trees are slow growing. Fruit are usually harvested from the ground.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
nut	4.0	2918	8.5	-	-	3.4	-
fruit	81.4	255	0.9	-	-	3.4	-

Image sourced from:

<https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ebimieowei-Etebu/publication/270721748/figure/fig1/AS:295085292965893@1447365224580/Figure-1-Unripe-Irvingia-fruits-on-the-day-of-harvest.png>

Nuts, seeds, herbs and other foods

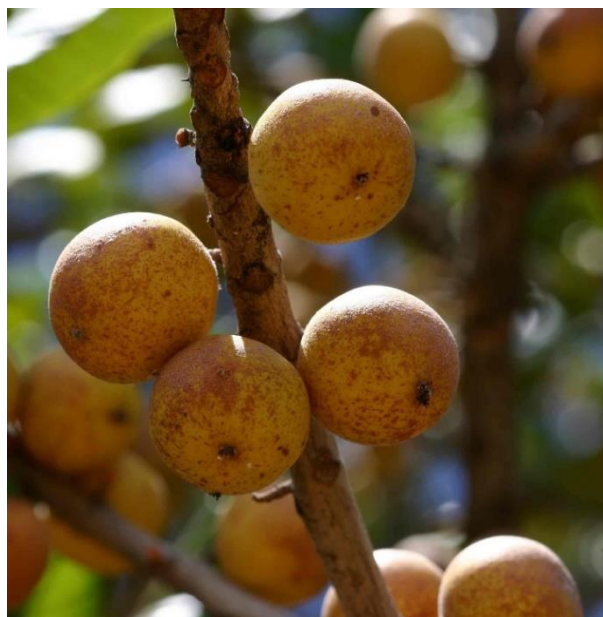
Common name: Mobola plum

Local:

Scientific name: *Parinari curatellifolia*

Plant family: CHRYSOBALANACEAE

Description: A tree which grows up to 12-20 m tall. The trunk is clean. The bark is rough and fire resistant. The young branches are hairy. The leaves are simple and oblong. They are 4-11 cm long by 2-5 cm wide. They narrow towards the base. The upper surface is shiny dark green and the lower surface is dull and covered with felt. The veins are conspicuous and run straight to the edge of the leaf. The flower buds occur in sprays at the ends of the branches. The flowers are pale green and have a strong sweet scent. The fruit are 2.5-4 cm long. They are olive green covered with rough grey spots. They become yellowish-red when ripe. The flesh of the fruit clings to the kernel. The fruit are edible. There are 2 subspecies.



Distribution: A tropical plant native to tropical Africa. It is common on sandy soils and in open deciduous woodland. It is very sensitive to frost and cold. It grows in areas with an annual rainfall between 700-1500 mm. It is often in poorly drained soils with a high water table. Plants can re-grow after fire. It grows in areas between sea level and 2100 m above sea level. It can grow in arid places. It grows in Miombo woodland in Africa.

Use: The fruit are eaten. The fruit are gathered after they fall. The skin and seeds are discarded but the pulp eaten. The fruit are used to make drinks-both intoxicating and non-intoxicating. The seeds are used for flavouring and as raw nuts.

Cultivation: Plants can be grown from seeds. Seeds should be collected fresh from fruit on the tree. The flesh is removed and the seeds dried in the shade. The seeds are sown shallowly. The seedlings need to be transplanted carefully to avoid damage to the taproot. They can be transplanted after 2 years.

Production: Trees from seed can reach 3.9 m after 9 years. Fruit production often only occurs every second year. Fruit matures in 250 days.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
nut	2.6	2737	28.7	-	-	5.5	3.1
fruit	64.6	533	1.6	-	70.9	0.9	0.4

Image accessed from: <http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-4xS96YPSHms/VqrsB0ZAqpl/AAAAAAAAAWI/RIYLyPiX3JA/s1600/parinari1.jpg>

Nuts, seeds, herbs and other foods

English: Alder agaric

Local:

Scientific name: *Schizophyllum commune*

Plant family: AGARICACEAE

Description: A mushroom with grey, fan-shaped fruiting bodies. They can be 2-4 cm across. The gills spread out from the point where the fruiting body attaches to logs. The edges of the gills are thick and split or like a groove.

Distribution: A tropical plant. It grows in tropical Africa. They grow in groups on dead wood.

Use: The mushroom is cooked and eaten.

Dried mushrooms can be preserved. It can be tough so is boiled for 1 or 2 hours with salt added or cooked with meat in curries. It is also cooked with dried fish.



Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
mushroom		1318	17.0				

Nuts, seeds, herbs and other foods

English: Sesame

Local:

Scientific name: *Sesamum indicum*

Plant family: PEDALIACEAE

Description: A small, erect annual plant. It is very branched and grows 1-2 m tall. The stem is stout, 4 sided and furrowed along its length. It is densely covered with fine, downy, glandular hairs that vary in shape. The lower leaves have long stalks and are spear shaped, often with lobes or a toothed edge. The leaf stalks are 3-11 cm long. The leaf blade is 4-20 cm long by 2-10 cm wide. Upper leaves are narrow and oblong. They are 0.5-2.5 cm wide. The flowers occur in the axils of upper leaves, either on their own, or



in groups of 2 or 3. They can be white, pink, purplish and with yellow spots and stripes. The fruit can be smooth or rough and there are 2 chambers in the capsule. The fruit are brown or purple. They are oblong and deeply grooved. The seeds are small and oval. They are 3 mm by 1.5 mm and vary in colour from white, yellow, grey, red, brown or black. The fully ripe pods burst open.

Distribution: A tropical plant that suits the hot, dry, semi-arid tropics and sub-tropics. It can tolerate short periods of drought once established. It needs a temperature of 20-24°C in early growth, then 27°C for ripening. It grows from sea level to about 1200 m in areas with an annual rainfall of 400-1000 mm. Soils need to be well drained. It is very intolerant of water-logging. It cannot stand high humidity and needs frost free conditions. It needs a dry period for seed drying. It does not like acid soils. It grows in open sunny places. It can grow in arid places.

Use: The seeds are eaten. They are used in soups or fried or boiled. They are used in tahini and hummus. Seeds are eaten in the form of sweetmeats. Roasted seeds are used in pickles. They are also put on bread. Oil from the seeds is used in cooking and on salads. The refuse from the seed after the oil has been extracted is boiled in water and made into soup.

Cultivation: Plants are grown from seed. Seed will not germinate below 21°C. Seeds are broadcast on well prepared land and then harrowed in using a light harrow, or sown 2-15 cm apart in rows 20-45 cm apart. Plants can be thinned or weeded during early growth to produce a better crop. Seeding rates of 9-11 kg/ha are used. Some varieties shatter easily.

Production: Yields of 340-500 kg/ha are average. Plants reach maturity in 80-180 days. Crops are harvested as the leaves begin to drop. Plants are cut and stooked or dried in racks. The hull is removed by soaking in water overnight, then partly dried and rubbed against a rough surface.

Food Value: Per 100 g edible portion

Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	proVit A µg	proVit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
seed (dry)	4.7	2397	17.7	1	-	14.6	7.8
leaf (raw)	85.5	188	3.4	-	-	-	-
oil	-	3683	0.2	-	-	-	-

Nutritional values of food plants by plant Family

Plant Family	Scientific name	Common name	Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	Vit A µg	Vit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg	Page
ACANTHACEAE	<i>Asystasia gangetica</i>	Chinese violet	leaf	82.6	234	3.7	-	42	4.7	-	30
AGARICACEAE	<i>Schizophyllum commune</i>	Alder Agaric	mushroom		1318	17.0					61
AMARANTHACEAE	<i>Amaranthus caudatus</i>	Grain amaranth	leaf	6.0	1034	28.8	33	-	23.3	5.5	28
AMARANTHACEAE	<i>Celosia argentea</i>	Quail grass	leaf	84.0	185	4.7	-	33	7.8	-	32
AMARANTHACEAE	<i>Celosia trigyna</i>	Silver spinach	leaf	89.0	139	2.7	94	10	5.0	-	33
ANACARDIACEAE	<i>Mangifera indica</i>	Mango	fruit	83.0	253	0.5	54	30	0.5	0.04	43
ANNONACEAE	<i>Annona senegalensis</i>	Wild custard apple	fruit	77.2	329	1.7		18.1	0.7	0.3	38
ARACEAE	<i>Colocasia esculenta</i>	Taro	root	66.8	1231	1.96	3	5	0.68	3.2	11
ARECACEAE	<i>Hyphaene thebaica</i>	Doum palm	fruit starch	10.7	1237	2.6	-	-	-	-	58
ASTERACEAE	<i>Crassocephalum crepidioides</i>	Okinawan spinach	leaf	93.1	76	2.5	-	10	-	-	49
BASELLACEAE	<i>Basella alba</i>	Indian spinach	leaf	85.0	202	5.0	56	100	4.0	-	31
BOMBACACEAE	<i>Adansonia digitata</i>	Boabab	fruit	16.0	1212	2.2	-	360	7.4	6.7	37
CHRYSOBALANACEAE	<i>Parinari curatellifoli</i>	Mobola plum	fruit	64.6	533	1.6	-	70.9	0.9	0.4	60
CUCURBITACEAE	<i>Cucurbita moschata</i>	Pumpkin	fruit	95.0	35	0.7	-	14	0.4	-	15
CUCURBITACEAE	<i>Citrullus lanatus</i>	Watermelon	fruit	94.0	92	0.4	20	5	0.3	0.1	40
CUCURBITACEAE	<i>Cucumis melo</i>	Cantaloupe	fruit	93.0	109	0.5	169	30	0.4	0.2	42
CUCURBITACEAE	<i>Cucurbita maxima</i>	Pumpkin	seed (dry)	6.9	2264	24.5	38	1.9	14.9	7.5	50
CUCURBITACEAE	<i>Cucurbita pepo</i>	Marrow	yellow fruit	92.0	97	1.0	180	8	1.4	-	51
CUCURBITACEAE	<i>Cucumeropsis mannii</i>	Dark egusi	seed	8.3	2278	26.2	-	-	6.1	7.1	57
DIOSCOREACEAE	<i>Dioscorea dumetorum</i>	African bitter yam	tuber	67	520	3.2	-	-	-	-	16
DIOSCOREACEAE	<i>Dioscorea bulbifera</i>	Potato yam	tuber	70.8	357	2.7	-	78	3.1	0.4	20
EUPHORBIACEAE	<i>Manihot esculenta</i>	Cassava	tuber	62.8	625	1.4	30	15	0.23	0.48	13
FABACEAE	<i>Cajanus cajan</i>	Pigeon pea	seed (young, boiled)	71.8	464	6.0	2	28.1	1.6	0.8	21
FABACEAE	<i>Lablab purpureus</i>	Lablab bean	seed (young)	86.9	209	3.0	14	5.1	0.8	0.4	22
FABACEAE	<i>Parkia filicoidea</i>	African locust bean	seed (dry)	7.0	1780	32.3	-	6	33.2	-	23
FABACEAE	<i>Phaseolus lunatus</i>	Lima bean	seed (young, raw)	70.2	473	6.8	30	23.4	3.1	0.8	24
FABACEAE	<i>Macrotyloma geocarpum</i>	Hausa groundnut	seed	9.0	1461	19.4	-	-	15.0	-	25
FABACEAE	<i>Vigna subterranea</i>	Bambara groundnut	seed (boiled)	66.4	578	7.7	-	-	1.4	1.1	26
FABACEAE	<i>Glycine max</i>	Soybean	seed (immature)	68.0	584	13.0	16	27	3.8	0.9	27
FABACEAE	<i>Arachis hypogea</i>	Peanut	seed (dry)	4.5	2364	24.3	-	-	2.0	3.0	55
GNETACEAE	<i>Gnetum buchholzianum</i>	Jointfir	leaf (raw)	69.8	432	6.0	-	100	5.6	-	52
IRVINGIACEAE	<i>Irvingia gabonensis</i>	African wild mango	nut	4.0	2918	8.5	-	-	3.4	-	59
LAURACEAE	<i>Persea americana</i>	Avocado	fruit	74.4	805	1.8	480	11	0.7	0.4	45
MALVACEAE	<i>Sida cordifolia</i>	Goat's horns	leaf	6.6	1296	24.2	-	-	79.8	-	34
MALVACEAE	<i>Triumfetta rhomboidea</i>	Burweed	leaf	78.4	284	4.2	-	-	29.2	-	35
MALVACEAE	<i>Abelmoschus esculentus</i>	Okra	fruit (cooked)	90.0	134	1.9	58	16.3	0.5	0.6	47

Plant Family	Scientific name	Common name	Edible part	Moisture %	Energy kJ	Protein g	Vit A µg	Vit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg	Page
MALVACEAE	<i>Corchorus olitorius</i>	Jute	leaf (cooked)	87.2	155	3.4	156	33.0	3.1	0.8	48
MALVACEAE	<i>Hibiscus cannabinus</i>	Vegetable kenaf	leaf	79.0	280	5.5	34	-	12.1	-	53
MORINGACEAE	<i>Moringa oleifera</i>	Horseradish tree	leaf (boiled)	87	189	4.7	40	31.0	2.0	0.2	54
MUSACEAE	<i>Musa x paradisiaca</i>	Hybrid plantains	fruit (sweet)	70.7	337	1.1	200	10	0.4	0.2	39
OLACACEAE	<i>Coula edulis</i>	African walnut	nut (dry)	8.3	1935	7.2	-	-	-	-	56
OPILIACEAE	<i>Opilia amentacea</i>	Catkin blooming	leaf	9.2	-	14.8	-	3.9	15.7	3.2	36
PEDALIACEAE	<i>Sesamum indicum</i>	Sesame	seed (dry)	4.7	2397	17.7	1	-	14.6	7.8	62
POACEAE	<i>Dactyloctenium aegyptium</i>	Comb fringe grass	seed	7.5	1234	9.8	-	-	6.9	4.7	17
POACEAE	<i>Sorghum bicolor</i>	Sorghum	seed	-	1459	11.1	-	-	-	-	18
POACEAE	<i>Pennisetum glaucum</i>	Bullrush millet	seed	11.6	1442	10.5	-	-	6.5	1.7	19
RUTACEAE	<i>Citrus sinensis</i>	Orange	fruit	86.8	197	0.94	21	53.2	0.1	0.1	41



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