LEAFY GREENS AND VEGETABLES
OF ETHIOPIA

PRACTICAL WAYS OF GROWING LOCAL
FOOD PLANTS AND DOING IT WELL

A project of the Rotary Club of Devonport North,
District 9830 and Food Plants International
www.foodplantsolutions.org
Nutrition 4 Education & Development (N4ED) is an Ethiopian nonprofit whose mission is to improve children's nutrition and ensure their full cognitive and physical development. The main activities of the organization focus is on giving parents the knowledge, the desire, the self-confidence, and the financial capacity to provide nutritious and balanced food for their children. That is done through nutrition and health education, saving and loan programs, business, life-skill, and technical training, affordable childcare services and gardening.

One of N4ED’s programs is gardening. This program is key to transforming in practice the nutritional concept that the organization teaches to communities with theoretical and demonstration classes. Food Plant Solutions will support N4ED by providing the most appropriate informative resources regarding plants that are full of nutrients and that are easy to cultivate in Ethiopia’s environment. This information is about different plants, and describes which part of the plant is edible, the nutrient value of each plant and well as other important information. N4ED will use these guides to implement its gardening projects and also to disseminate it among other stakeholders, the important information on Ethiopian endemic nutritious plants.

For further details about the project please contact us at: info@foodplantsolutions.org

We welcome and encourage your support.

**Food Plant Solutions** - A project of the Rotary Club of Devonport North, Rotary District 9830 & Food Plants International.

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

country of beautiful leafy vegetables

Okra

Jute

Shepherd’s purse

Bean leaves
Leafy greens -
the health foods of the nation

Leptadenia lancifolia

African cabbage

Sweet potato

Jute
Using leafy greens —
collect and cook a mixture of leaves

Many edible leafy greens grow around houses and along roadsides.

Healthy food

Green leafy vegetables should be cooked.
Healthy people eat leafy greens

- Many plants have edible leaves.
- Edible leaves are nutritious.
- Normally, all leaves should be cooked to kill bacteria.
- Everybody should eat a fish tin full of dark green leaves every day to stay healthy.
- Some leafy greens can be grown as hedges, in swamps, and around houses to provide a regular daily supply of leafy vegetables.
Iron is important, it is what makes our blood red.
Iron helps oxygen get to our lungs. This helps us to have energy to work. When we are short of iron we are called anaemic. Iron is more available when Vitamin C is also present.
Grain amaranth

The leaves and young plants are eaten cooked.

Seed can be ground for flour.
Garden cress

Young leaves are used in salads or cooked as a vegetable. Seeds can be sprouted and eaten.

*Lepidium sativum*
The leaves and shoots are eaten cooked. Seeds can be eaten raw.

Hibiscus trionum
Sweet potato leaf

Leaves are edible raw or cooked.

Ground cover or climbing plant.

Ipomoea batatas
Shepherd’s purse

The leaves are a good source of Vitamin A.

Young leaves are eaten raw or cooked.

Capsella bursa-pastoris
Horseradish tree

The young tops and leaves are eaten cooked. They can be dried for later use.

A fast growing small tree

Moringa oleifera
Leptadenia lancifolia

Young leaves are edible after cooking.

Leptadenia lancifolia
Taro leaf

A good quality delicacy.

Colocasia esculenta
Indian nettle

*Leaves are eaten cooked as a vegetable*

*Acalypha indica*
Leafy greens of Ethiopia

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

- Taro
- Okra
- Bitter cucumber leaf
- Bottle gourd leaf
- Boabab
Plant poisons

Some foods contain substances that can cause illness. Check preparation methods before eating. Some examples are:

- Bacteria on leaves can cause stomach upsets. Food should be cooked to kill bacteria.
- Cyanide is a poison commonly found in plants (e.g. cassava). It makes them bitter, but is destroyed when food is well cooked.
- Oxalates are common in plants (e.g. taro). They are sour and can burn the throat. Changing the water during cooking can reduce oxalates.
- Plants can accumulate nitrates that are poisonous to children. This happens when excess nitrogen fertilisers are added to some leafy vegetables (e.g. amaranth).
Vegetable foods of Ethiopia

Bitter cucumber

Okra
Vegetables for variety and nutrition

Some vegetables and edible leaves should be planted near houses so they are easily available, even on wet days, or when people can’t get to distant gardens.

As some vegetables only grow in certain seasons, families should plant a wide range to provide food all year.
Vitamin A is very important for eyesight and fighting disease, particularly in infants, young children and pregnant women. People who are short of Vitamin A have trouble seeing at night. In plants, this chemical occurs in a form that has to be converted into Vitamin A in our bodies.
Vitamin C value of vegetables

Vitamin C is important for helping us to avoid sickness.

![African cabbage](image)

![Bitter cucumber](image)
Vegetables - nutritious and tasty

African yam bean

Guar bean

Bitter cucumber

Boabab
Young leaves, pods and seeds can be eaten. Leaves are edible when cooked, like slippery cabbage.

The pods can be eaten cooked or used to thicken soups.

Abelmoschus esculentus
Bitter cucumber

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

The leaves are also eaten.

Soaking seeds for 24 hours before planting improves germination
Marama bean

The young pods are eaten raw. The seeds are usually roasted before eating.

Tylosoema fassoglensis
Velvet bean

Beans are soaked until they sprout, then washed and boiled.
African cabbage

The young leaves are eaten raw or cooked.

Young shoots and flower buds are eaten raw.

Brassica carinata
Jute

First leaves can be harvested after 6 weeks.

Corchorus olitorius
Bottle gourd

Young fruit can be boiled, steamed, fried or pickled.

Young tips and leaves can be eaten.

Lagenaria siceraria
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