LEAFY GREENS AND VEGETABLES OF VIETNAM

PRACTICAL WAYS OF GROWING LOCAL FOOD PLANTS AND DOING IT WELL

A project of the Rotary Club of Devonport North and District 9830
Leafy greens and vegetables of Vietnam

Food Plant Solutions produces educational materials to enable people to understand the nutritional value of local food plants and increase awareness of highly nutritious plants that are adapted to the local environment. Some of these plants are under-utilised species and many are superior to imported foods and plants. Food Plant Solutions produces these materials because every minute of every day, five children under the age of five die from malnutrition.

We welcome and encourage your support.

Food Plant Solutions - A project of the Rotary Club of Devonport North, & Rotary District 9830.
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.
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Vietnam - country of beautiful leafy vegetables
Leafy greens - the health foods of the nation

Kangkong
Indian spinach
Sweet potato
Kale
Leafy greens of Vietnam

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

Taro

Bitter cucumber leaf

Okra

Indian mustard

Pumpkin shoots
Using leafy greens - collect and cook a mixture of leaves

Many edible leafy greens grow around houses and along roadsides.

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

- Many plants have edible leaves.
- Edible leaves are nutritious.
- Normally, all leaves should be cooked to kill bacteria.
- Everybody should eat a fish tin full of dark green leaves every day to stay healthy.
- Some leafy greens can be grown as hedges, in swamps, and around houses to provide a regular daily supply of leafy vegetables.
Green leafy vegetables - Iron content

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.
Seeds can be eaten.
Indian mustard

Leaves are cooked and eaten. They can be stir-fried, added to stews and soups.

Seeds can be sprouted and eaten.

Brassica juncea
Kangkong

Ipomoea aquatica

Young tips of shoots can be eaten cooked or raw.
Sweet potato leaf

Ground cover or climbing plant.

Leaves are edible raw or cooked.  

Ipomoea batatas
Indian spinach

Leaves and young shoots can be eaten cooked or raw.

Leaves can be dried and stored.

Bassella alba
Horseradish tree

A fast growing small tree.

*Moringa oleifera*

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

Leaves are eaten boiled, or steamed, in soups and stews.

Young leaves can be eaten raw.

Brassica oleracea var. acephala
Taro leaf

A good quality delicacy.

Colocasia esculenta
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 Vietnam

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.

Chinese broccoli

Eggplant

Chinese radish

As some vegetables only grow in certain seasons, you should plant a wide range to provide food all year.
Vitamin A value of vegetables

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.

![Okra](image)

![Graph showing Vitamin A values of different vegetables](chart)
Vitamin C value of vegetables

Vitamin C is important for helping us to avoid sickness.
Vegetables - nutritious and tasty

Winged bean

Wax gourd

Bitter cucumber

Chinese water chestnut
Okra

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*
Soaking seeds for 24 hours before planting improves germination.

Bitter cucumber

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

The leaves are also eaten.

Momordica charantia
Winged bean

The young leaves, young pods, ripe seeds, flowers and root tubers are edible.

Psophocarpus tetragonobolus
Pumpkin

Fruit are eaten cooked, boiled, fried or baked.
Seeds are eaten roasted.
Young leaves, growing tips and flowers are edible.

*Cucurbita moschata*
Chinese broccoli

Flower stalk, flower head, buds and tender leaves are all eaten.

Brassica oleracea var. albaglabra
Chinese water chestnut

The tubers are cooked and eaten. Corms can be eaten raw, roasted or boiled, after they have been peeled.
Chinese radish

The roots are cooked and eaten.

The young leaves can be eaten cooked.

*Raphanus sativus var. longipinnatus*
Pigeon pea

Young leaves, shoots and pods are eaten.

Young seeds are cooked and eaten like peas.

Cajanus cajan
Wax gourd

White flesh is added to stir fried dishes.

Seeds can be dried and eaten.

Benincasa hispida
Acknowledgements

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# Image acknowledgements

Most images used in this publication are drawn from the Food Plants International database. Acknowledgement is given for images of the following plants sourced from the internet.

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