POTENTIALLY IMPORTANT LEAFY GREENS AND VEGETABLES IN TIMOR-LESTE

PRACTICAL WAYS OF GROWING LOCAL FOOD PLANTS AND DOING IT WELL
Potentially Important Leafy Greens and Vegetables in Timor-Leste

ChildFund Timor-Leste is a representative office of ChildFund Australia. ChildFund Australia is an international development agency that works in partnership with children and their communities to create lasting and meaningful change by supporting long-term community development and promoting children’s rights and directly implements child-focused development programs in six countries—Vietnam, Papua New Guinea, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, and Timor-Leste.

ChildFund Timor-Leste has partnered with Food Plant Solutions to improve the health and nutrition for children under 5 years by promoting kitchen gardens and equip parents with skills to provide nutritious food to their girl and boy child, especially in the first 1000 days.

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

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Potentially Important Leafy Greens and Vegetables in Timor-Leste

Practical ways of growing local food plants, and doing it well

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Food Plants for Healthy Diets in Timor-Leste
Timor-Leste
country of beautiful leafy vegetables
Leafy greens - the health foods of the nation

Slippery cabbage

Indian spinach

Sweet potato

Spinach jointfir
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

Kangkong

Indian spinach

Iron (mg/100 g)

- Kankong - leaf
- Indian spinach - leaf
- Horseradish tree - leaf
- Sweetleaf - leaf
- Spinach jointfir - leaf
- Sweetfern - leaf
- Amaranths - leaf
- Slippery cabbage - leaf
- Ball head cabbage - raw leaf
- Lettuce - leaf
Vitamin C for good health

Moringa

Indian spinach

![Vitamin C Comparison Chart](chart.png)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Vitamin C (mg/100 g)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moringa - leaf</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian spinach - leaf</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taro - leaf</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweetleaf - leaf</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bitter cucumber - pod (raw)</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kangkong - leaf</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange - fruit</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okra - pod (fresh)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amaranths - leaf</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomato - fruit</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Vitamin A value of leaves

- Orange sweet potato - tuber (baked)
- Avocado - fruit
- Bitter cucumber - pod (raw)
- Spinach jointfir - leaf
- Amaranths - leaf
- Ball head cabbage - leaf (raw)
- Sweetfern - frond
- Moringa - leaf
- Okra - pod (fresh)
- Tomato - fruit

Note: The values are given in micrograms per 100 grams (μg/100 g).
Slippery cabbage - a delicious, highly nutritious leaf

Fry or steam it to avoid it going slimy.

*Abelmoschus manihot*
Amaranth - a quick growing green

A home garden favourite

Scattering seeds in old fire ashes helps plants grow well.
Chinese taro

A nutritious leaf that grows easily.

*Xanthosoma sagittifolium*
Kangkong

The young tips of shoots can be boiled, steamed or stir-fried.

Plants can be grown from cuttings or seeds.

Ipomoea aquatica
Sweet potato leaf

Leaves are edible raw or cooked.

Ground cover or climbing plant.

Ipomoea batatas
Spinach jointfir

Young leaf tips are eaten cooked.

Gnetum gnemon
Sweetleaf

The young tips, young leaves, flowers and small fruit are eaten raw.

Older leaves are cooked.

Shrubs grow for a long time.

Sauropus androgynus
Cassava

*Manihot esculenta*

Young leaves are edible after cooking.
Indian spinach

The leaves can be fried, steamed and used in soups and stews.

It grows up fences, sticks or over stumps.

Basella alba
Taro leaf

A good quality delicacy.

Colocasia esculenta
Sweetfern

The fronds are cooked and eaten as a vegetable.
Leafy greens of Timor-Leste

Moringa

Indian spinach

Winged bean leaves

Amaranth

Bulb onion

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

- Taro
- Okra
- Slippery cabbage
- Chinese taro
- Bitter cucumber leaf
Edible leaves

- Choko leaf
- Cashew leaf
- Winged bean leaf

Cashew leaf

Choko leaf
Edible leaves

- Breadfruit leaf
- Cassava
- Peanut
- Pigeon pea
- Kangkong
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 Timor-Leste

- Bitter cucumber
- Lotus root
- Okra

![Map of Timor-Leste](image)
Vegetables for variety and nutrition

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

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

Okra

Winged bean

Moringa

Chinese taro
Foxtail millet - versatile seeds

The sprouted seeds can be used like a vegetable.
Okra

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

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

Abelmoschus esculentus
Bitter cucumber

Pods are eaten cooked.

The leaves can be used in salads or cooked.

Momordica charantia

Seeds are best soaked for 24 hours before sowing to give quick germination.
Lima bean

The seeds, leaves and young pods are all eaten.

*Phaseolus lunatus*
Winged bean

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

Psophocarpus tetragonolobus
Choko

The fruit can be pickled, baked or steamed.

The entire fruit is planted as the seed can not stand drying out.

*Sechium edule*
Lotus root

The white roots can be eaten raw or cooked.

Seeds can be eaten raw or roasted.

*Nelumbo nucifera*
Pigeon pea - a shrub with edible seeds and leaves

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

Being a legume it puts nitrogen into the soil.

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

*Cajanus cajan*
Moringa

The roots, leaves, flowers and fruits are eaten cooked.
Acknowledgements

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