FOOD PLANTS FOR HEALTHY DIETS IN ZIMBABWE

PRACTICAL WAYS OF GROWING LOCAL FOOD PLANTS AND DOING IT WELL

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

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

Food plants for healthy diets in Zimbabwe

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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 and 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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Using food plant resources well

The health, well-being and food security of a nation requires making the best use of all available food plant resources.

Food plants for healthy diets in Zimbabwe


Mongong nut


Tamarillo


Spotted cat's ear

It is time to discover and explore the amazing range of frequently over-looked nutrient-rich food plants that occur in Zimbabwe.

Healthy diets

To stay healthy all people, and especially children, should eat a wide range of food plants. This should include some plants from each of the food groups:

- Energy foods - e.g. sweet potato
- Growth foods - e.g. Shepherd's purse
- Health foods - e.g. Red root amaranth

Then each of the nutrients required by our bodies will be met in a balanced manner.

Food security

Grow a range of different food plants, planted at different times throughout the year, so food doesn't become short in some seasons. This should include fruit and nut trees.


Boabab


Moringa


Shepherd's purse


Chinese taro


Sweet potato


Spotted cat's ear


Taro


African rice

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).

Iron for healthy blood

Iron is important in our blood. It is what makes our blood red.

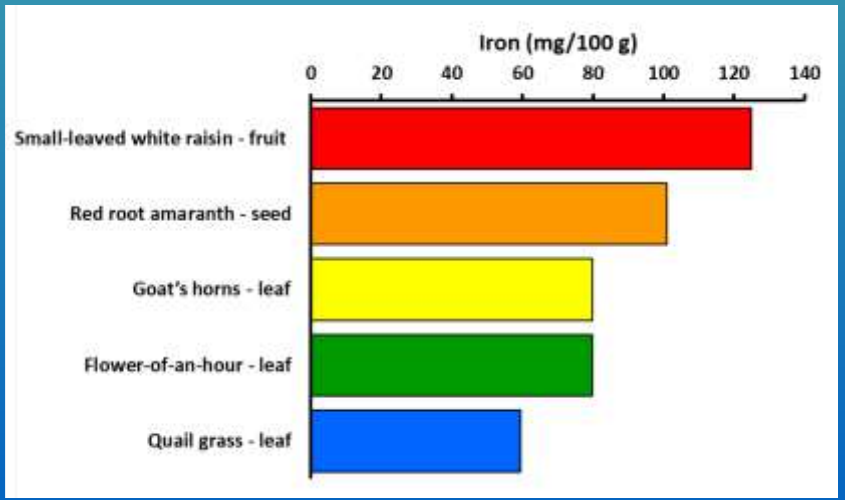
Iron helps oxygen get to our lungs. This helps us to have energy to work.

When we are short of iron we are called anaemic. Iron is more available when Vitamin C is also present.

Soaking dried peas overnight before cooking them makes the iron more available.

Small leaved white raisin

Red root amaranth



Vitamin A for good eyesight

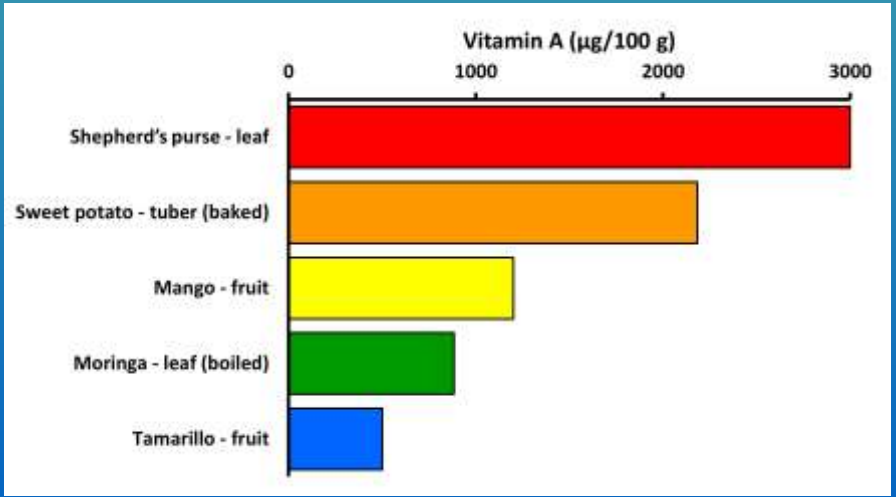

Sweet potato

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


Shepherd's purse

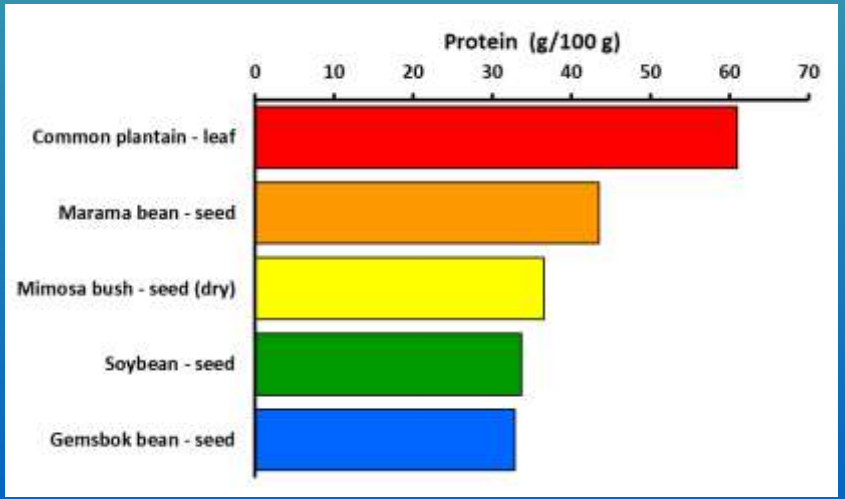


Protein foods

Food plants can be important sources of protein, particularly if fish and meat are not readily available.

Mimosa bush seed

Common plantain

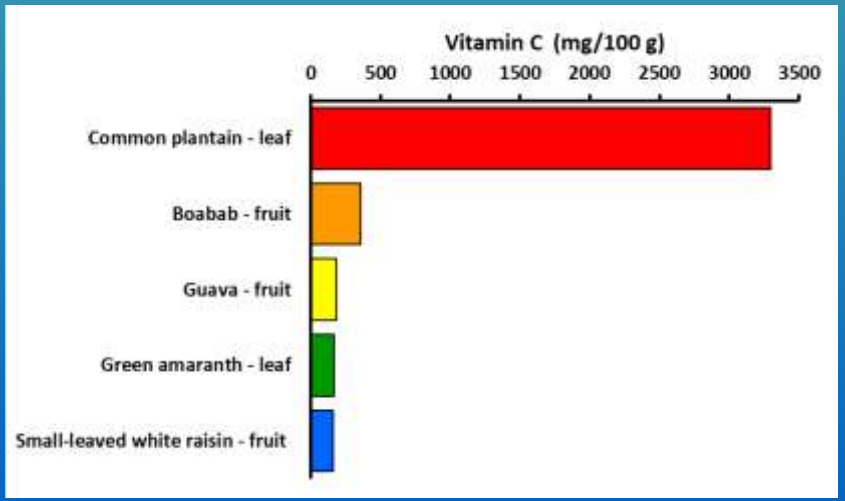


Vitamin C for good health

Vitamin C is important for helping us to avoid sickness.

Common plantain

Boabab

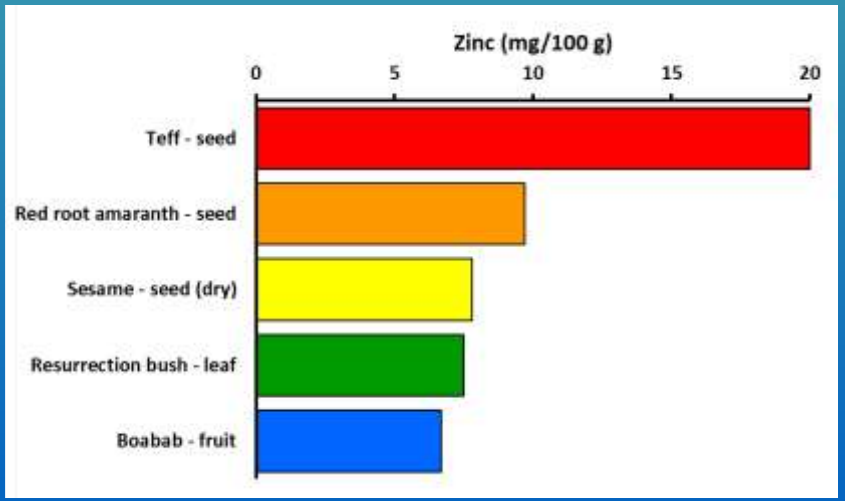


Zinc for growing bodies

Zinc is particularly important for young children and teenagers to help recover from illness and be healthy.


Red root amaranth


Teff seed



Leafy green foods are important

Dark green leaves are an important source of iron, protein and other vitamins and minerals essential for healthy diets.

Dark green leaves contain folate, which all women of child-bearing age need.

Low levels of folate at conception can lead to serious birth defects.

Everybody, especially women and children, should eat a hand full of leafy greens each day.

African cabbage

Moringa

Root crops are perfect plants for hot humid tropical climates

Starchy staple foods are the lifeblood of Zimbabwe.


Taro


Sweet potato


Chinese taro


Cassava

Beans provide protein and restore soils

Beans have special bacteria attached to their roots that allow them to take nitrogen from the air and put it into the soil for plants to use.
It is free fertiliser!


African locust bean

Gemsbok bean


Marama bean


Peanut

Everyone should eat some fruit everyday

Fruit provide minerals and vitamins and other important nutrients that everybody needs to stay healthy and well.

Good farmers plant several kinds of fruit trees.


Cape gooseberry


Mango


Tamarillo


Guava

Fruit and nut trees for around houses

Fruit to be enjoyed by all.

Some need to be planted for the future.

Many fruit are seasonal. Some grow quickly.


Mango


Indian banyan


Tamarillo


Guava

Vegetables for variety and nutrition

Some vegetables only grow in certain seasons. Families should plant a wide variety to provide food all year.

Some vegetables and edible leaves should be planted near houses so they are easily available even on wet days, or when people are too tired or busy to go to distant gardens.


Green amaranth


Moringa


Common plantain


African cabbage


Capsicum

Plants for garden edges

Larger plants can be grown around the edges of gardens.


Small leaved white raisin


Winter squash


Taro


Cassava

Plants for garden edges


Flower-of-an-hour


Guava


Moringa


Tamarillo

Plants for garden beds

Green amaranth

Peanut

Goat's horns

Sweet potato

Capsicum

Plants to climb on fences

Many plants can be grown on fences around houses and gardens.

Gemsbok bean

Cape gooseberry

Marama bean

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Food Plant Solutions operates in accordance with Rotary International Policy but is not an agency of, or controlled by, Rotary International.

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.

Scientific name	Common name	Image URL
Amaranthus viridis	Green amaranth	https://www.cabidigitallibrary.org/cms/10.1079/cabicompendium.4654/asset/7022728c-2351-471b-9146-dacbcb32556e/assets/graphic/amaran__.jpg https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/2/20/Amaranthus_viridis_25042014_1.jpg/220px-Amaranthus_viridis_25042014_1.jpg
Capsella bursa-pastoris	Shepherd's purse	https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fichier:Capsella_bursa-pastoris_1.JPG
Hypochaeris radicata	Spotted cat's ear	https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hypochaeris.radicata.Alan.JPG#/media/File:Hypochaeris.radicata.Alan.JPG
Oryza glaberrima	African rice	https://i.pinimg.com/474x/77/48/1f/77481fb8134243595c851b56ac63ea4c--natural-resources-mali.jpg
Tylosema esculentum	Gemsbok bean	https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/8/8d/Tylosema_esculenta_pod.PNG/220px-Tylosema_esculenta_pod.PNG
Tylosema fassoglensis	Marama bean	http://palkowitschia.cz/sukulenty/img/travelling/kenya/flora/Tylosema%20fassoglensis%20Ghazi%20Kenya%202014_0192.jpg
Xanthosoma sagittifolium	Chinese taro	https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Xanthosoma_sagittifolium_in_Bukidnon,_Philippines_01.jpg#/media/File:Xanthosoma_sagittifolium_in_Bukidnon,_Philippines_01.jpg

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