

FOOD PLANTS FOR HEALTHY DIETS IN RWANDA

***PRACTICAL WAYS OF GROWING
LOCAL FOOD PLANTS AND DOING
IT WELL***



**FOOD PLANT
SOLUTIONS**
ROTARIAN ACTION GROUP

*Solutions to Malnutrition
and Food Security*



The Mustard Seed Institute

A project of the Rotary Club of Devonport North,
District 9830 and Food Plants International



www.foodplantsolutions.org

Food plants for healthy diets in Rwanda



The Mustard Seed Institute

The Vision of the Mustard Seed Institute is to be a community-based social enterprise providing practical and sustainable solutions for extreme poverty eradication and peace building through research and innovation, training and skills transfer, mediation and dialogues. In the rural community of Rwankuba, Eastern Province, Rwanda.

The Mustard Seed Institute has partnered with Food Plant Solutions to improve the health and well being of the local community through education and advocacy on agricultural innovations. With a focus on gaining knowledge about which crops to grow in order to lower malnutrition levels amongst the local children.

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

We welcome and encourage your support.



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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.

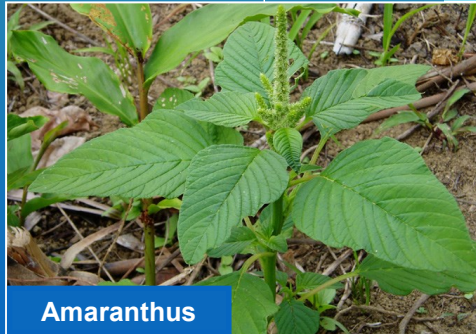


Food plants for healthy diets in Rwanda

With a rich, diverse tropical climate and a variety of soils, altitudes, and rainfall patterns it is time to discover and explore the amazing range of frequently overlooked tropical food plants that suit the locations, and are rich in nutrients.

It's time for Rwanda to be proud of its own tropical foods.

There are many tropical food plants in the region. Tanzania has 1949 species, Uganda has 1160 species and Burundi has 375 species.



Healthy diets

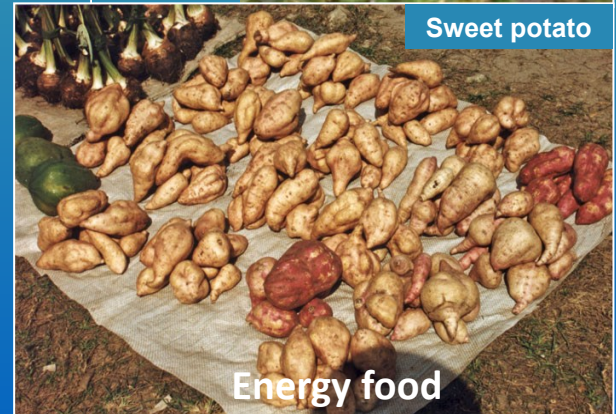
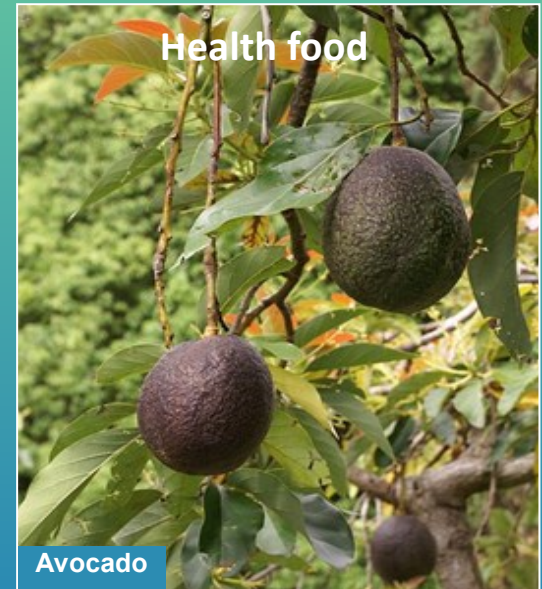
To stay healthy all people, and especially children, should eat a wide range of food plants. This should include some plants from each of the food groups:

Energy foods - e.g. Sweet potato

Growth foods - e.g. Peanuts

Health foods - e.g. Avocado

Eating a variety ensures 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.



Finger millet



Cassava



Moringa



Cantaloupe



Jute



Sunflower



Taro

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.

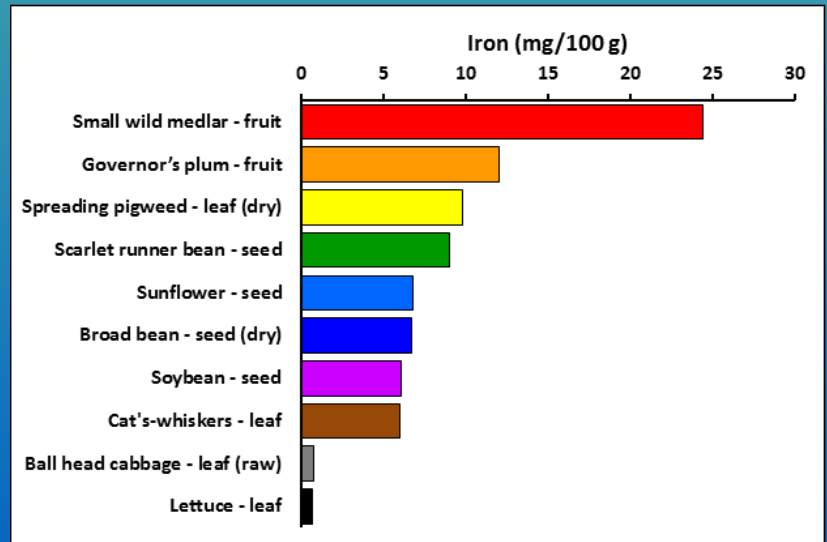
Soaking beans overnight before cooking them makes the iron more available.



Small wild medlar



Governor's plum

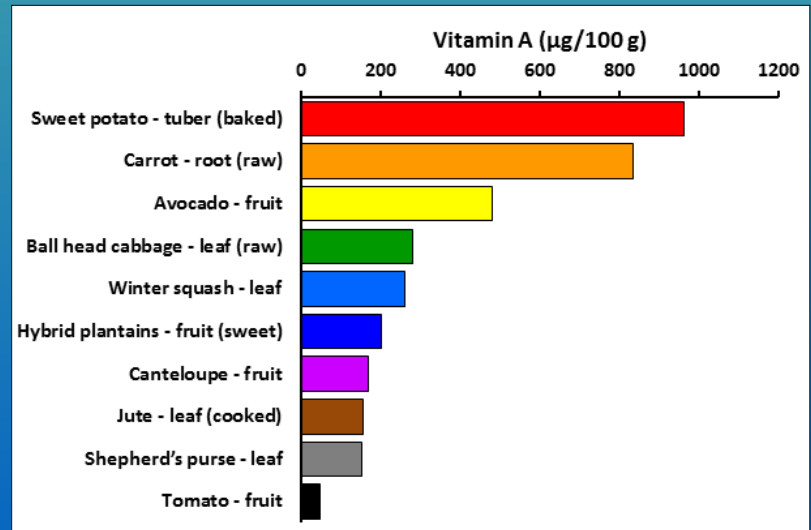


Vitamin A for good eyesight

Vitamin A is very important for eyesight and fighting disease, particularly in infants, young children and pregnant women.

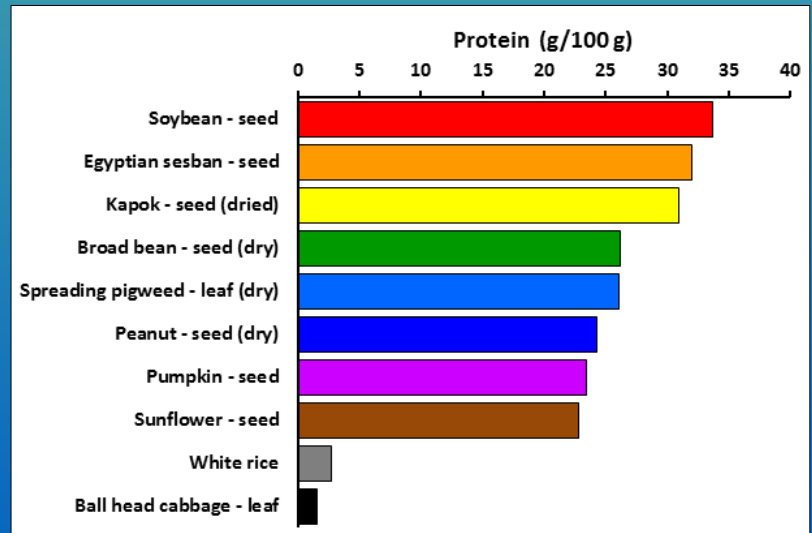
People who are short of Vitamin A have trouble seeing at night.

In plants, this chemical occurs in a form that has to be converted into Vitamin A in our bodies.



Protein foods

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



Vitamin C for good health

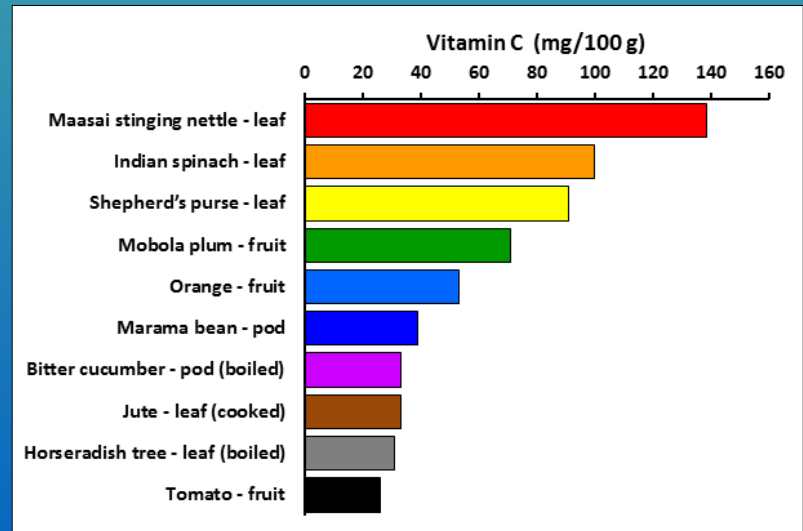
Vitamin C is important for helping us to avoid sickness.



Maasai stinging nettle

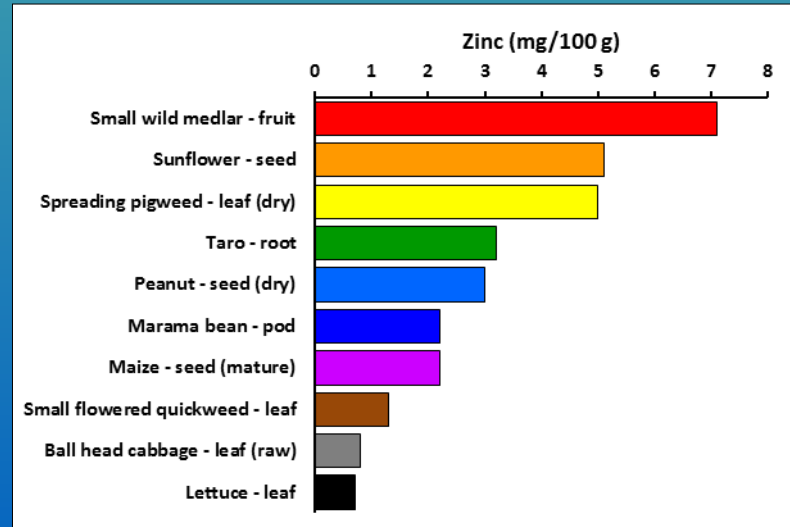
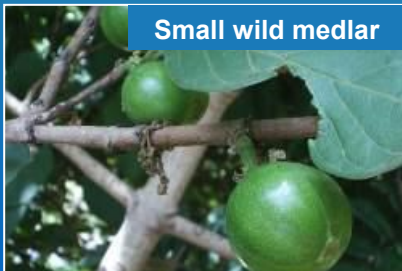


Indian spinach



Zinc for growing bodies

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



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.



Root crops are perfect plants for hot humid tropical climates

Starchy staple foods are the lifeblood of Rwanda.

We need to look out for pests, disease and signs that the plants are growing in poor soil.



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!



Everyone should eat some fruit everyday

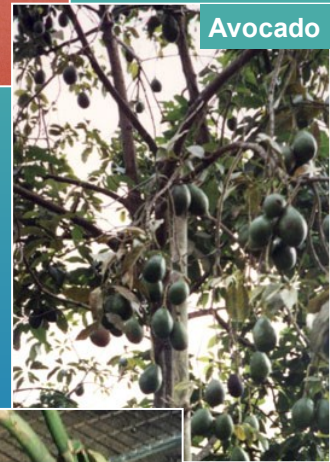
Fruit provide minerals and vitamins and other important nutrients that everybody needs to stay healthy and well.

Good farmers plant several kinds of fruit trees.

Cantaloupe



Avocado



Governors plum



Banana



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.



Mobola plum



White mulberry



Peanut

Vegetables for variety and nutrition

As some vegetables only grow in certain seasons, families should plant a wide range 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.



Plants for garden edges

Larger plants can be grown around the edges of gardens.



Plants for garden edges



Plants for garden beds

Silver spinach



Peanut



Sweet potato



Finger millet



Cat's whiskers

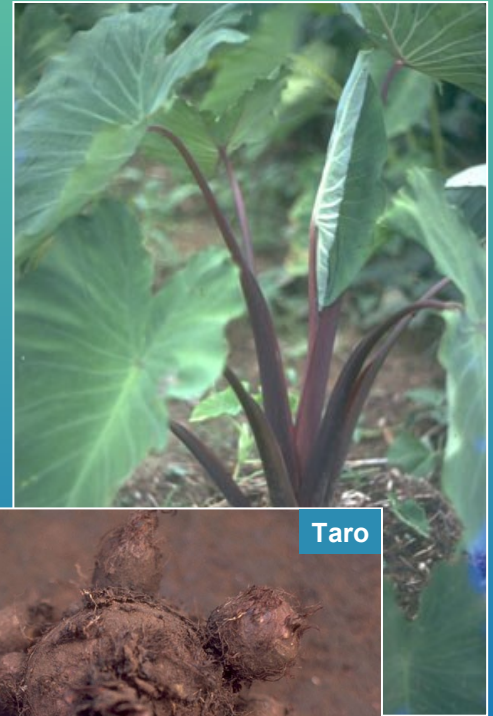
Plants to climb on fences

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



Plants for swampy places

Food plants can be grown in all sort of places, even swamps.



Pests, disease and deficiencies

Plants that are grown well are less damaged by insect pests and diseases. They may go dry or pale in poor soil.

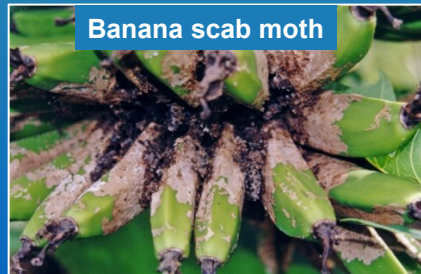
It is important to recognise these signs and act early.

This fungus scab gets bad when soils are poor, and also on varieties from overseas.



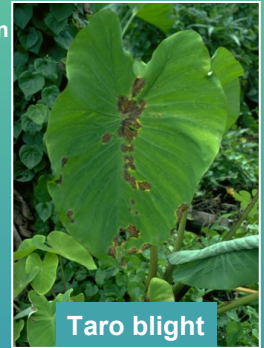
Wrinkled sweet potato leaves

The very small moth hides from the sun under the flower bracts.

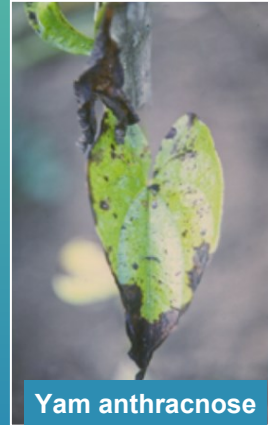


Banana scab moth

The taro blight fungus washes in the rain on hot wet nights.



Taro blight



Yam anthracnose

This fungus makes leaves die off early when the leaves get damaged.

Cassava growing in very poor coral soil cannot take up enough plant food.



Cassava short of nutrients

Scientific name	English	Kinyarwanda
<i>Amaranthus graecizans</i>	Spreading pigweed	
<i>Annona senegalensis</i>	Wild custard apple	
<i>Arachis hypogea</i>	Peanut	
<i>Basella alba</i>	Indian spinach	
<i>Cajanus cajan</i>	Pigeon pea	
<i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i>	Shepherd's purse	
<i>Ceiba pentandra</i>	Kapok	
<i>Celosia trigyna</i>	Silver spinach	
<i>Cleome gynandra</i>	Cat's-whiskers	
<i>Colocasia esculenta</i>	Taro	
<i>Corchorus olitorius</i>	Jute	
<i>Cucumis melo</i>	Cantaloupe	
<i>Cucurbita maxima</i>	Winter squash	
<i>Cucurbita moschata</i>	Pumpkin	

Scientific name	English	Kinyarwanda
<i>Cucurbita pepo</i>	Marrow	
<i>Daucus carota subsp. sativus</i>	Carrot	
<i>Eleusine coracana</i>	Finger millet	
<i>Ensete ventricosum</i>	Esente	
<i>Flacourtia indica</i>	Governor's plum	
<i>Galinsoga parviflora</i>	Small flowered quickweed	
<i>Glycine max</i>	Soybean	
<i>Helianthus annuus</i>	Sunflower	
<i>Ipomoea batatas</i>	Sweet potato	
<i>Lablab purpureus</i>	Lablab bean	
<i>Lagenaria siceraria</i>	Bottle gourd	
<i>Manihot esculenta</i>	Cassava	
<i>Momordica charantia</i>	Bitter cucumber	
<i>Moringa oleifera</i>	Horseradish tree	

Scientific name	English	Tetun
<i>Morus alba</i>	White mulberry	
<i>Musa x paradisiaca</i>	Hybrid plantains	
<i>Parinari curatellifolia</i>	Mobola plum	
<i>Persea americana</i>	Avocado	
<i>Phaseolus coccineus</i>	Scarlet runner bean	
<i>Sesbania sesban</i>	Egyptian sesban	
<i>Solanum melongena</i>	Eggplant	
<i>Sorghum bicolo</i>	Sorghum	
<i>Tylosema fassoglensis</i>	Marama bean	
<i>Urtica massaica</i>	Maasai stinging nettle	
<i>Vangueria infausta</i>	Small wild medlar	
<i>Vicia faba</i>	Broad bean	
<i>Vigna radiata</i>	Mung bean	
<i>Zea mays</i>	Maize	

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The Mustard Seed Institute

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