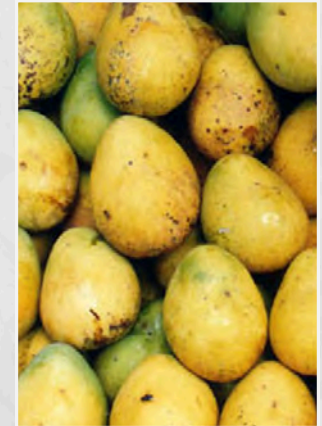


FOOD PLANTS FOR HEALTHY DIETS IN BURUNDI



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



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



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

www.foodplantsolutions.org



Food plants for healthy diets in Burundi



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 developed by Tasmanian agricultural scientist Bruce French, AO.

Version 1, May 2026 (English)

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 Burundi

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

Mango



Finger millet



Goat's horns

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. Japanese arrowroot
- Growth foods - e.g. Marama bean
- Health foods - e.g. Bitter cucumber

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

Marama bean



Growth Food

Bitter cucumber



Health Food

Japanese arrowroot



Energy Food

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.



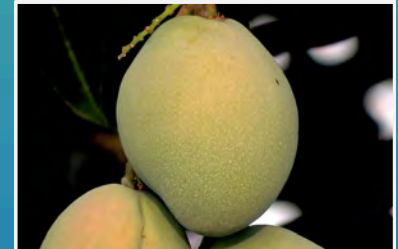
Watermelon



Bitter cucumber



Bush okra



Mango



Pumpkin



Moringa

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).

Starchy staples are energy foods

Starchy staple foods are important sources of the energy we need to work and play.



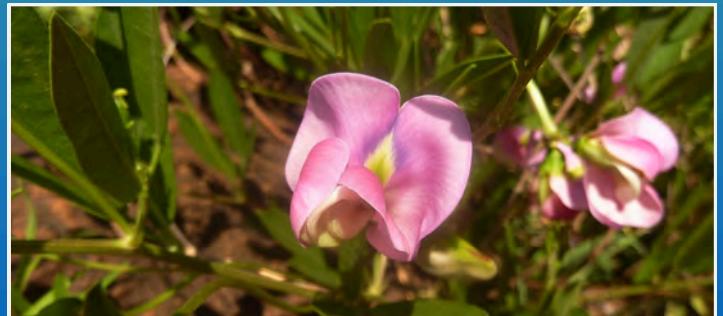
Common millet



Taro



Cassava



African yam bean

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!



Soybean



Sword bean



Pigeon pea



Mung bean

Vegetables for variety and nutrition

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



Pumpkin



Eggplant

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.



Carrot

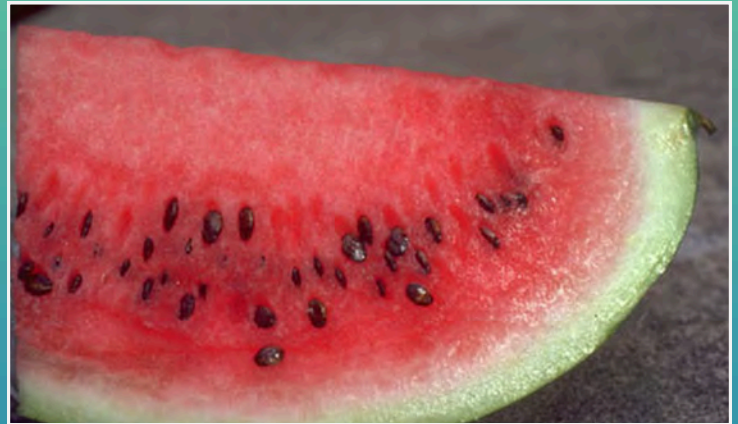


Bottle gourd

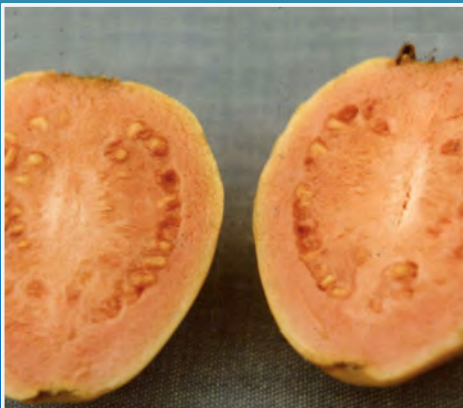
Everyone should eat some fruit every day

Fruit provides fibre, energy, minerals and vitamins that everybody needs to stay healthy and well.

Good farmers plant several kinds of fruit trees.



Watermelon



Guava



Mango



Mobola plum

Leafy green foods are important

Dark green leaves are an important source of fibre, iron and other vitamins and minerals essential for healthy diets. Dark green leaves contain folate, which is important for everyone, particularly women.

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.



Moringa



Burweed

Nuts are nutritious and tasty

Nuts are rich in protein, healthy fats, vitamins and minerals.

Some need to be planted for the future.

Nuts can be stored for future use.



Smooth-shelled macadamia



Peanut



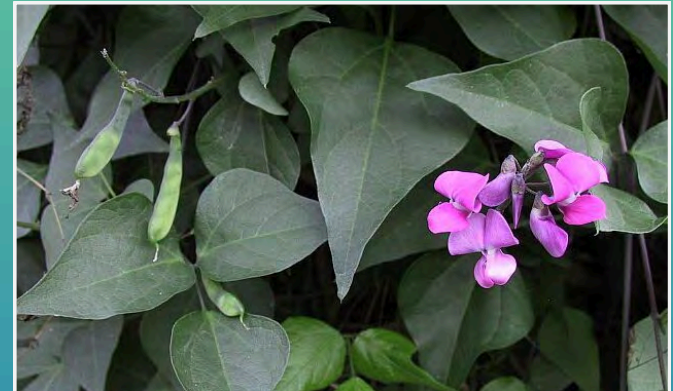
Sunflower



Desert date

Energy foods

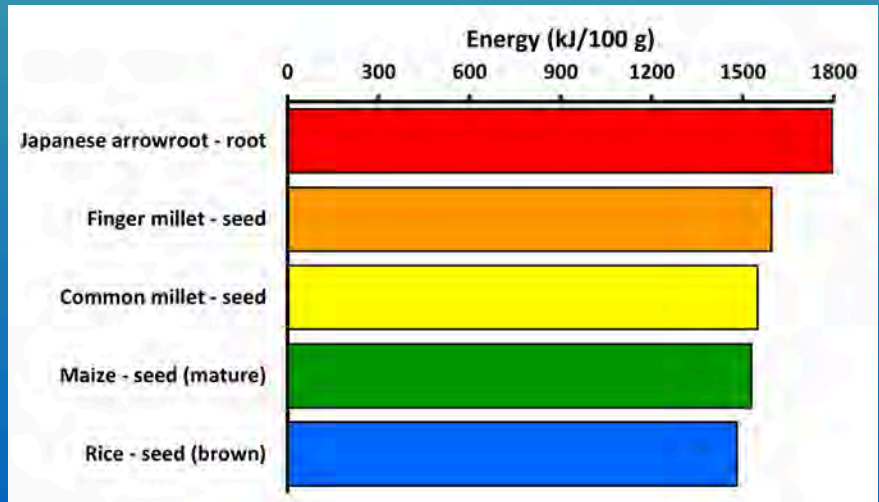
Starchy foods provide energy and are most commonly roots, tubers or cereal grains. Unprocessed starchy foods are important sources of fibre, vitamins and minerals.



Japanese arrowroot



Finger millet



Protein foods

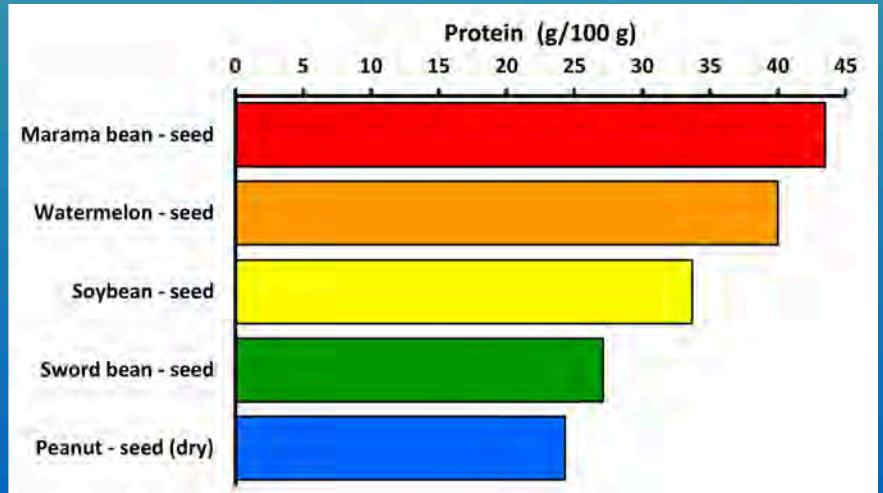
Food plants are important sources of protein, particularly when fish and meat are not readily available or included in the diet.



Marama bean



Soybean



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.

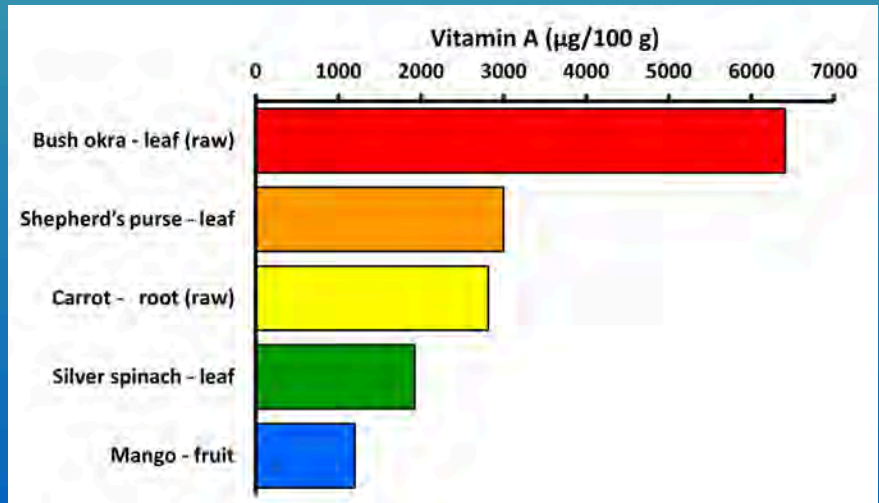
Plants contain a simple form of vitamin A which our bodies convert to a more useful form.



Bush okra



Shepherd's purse



Vitamin C for good health

Vitamin C is important for helping us to avoid sickness and heal wounds.

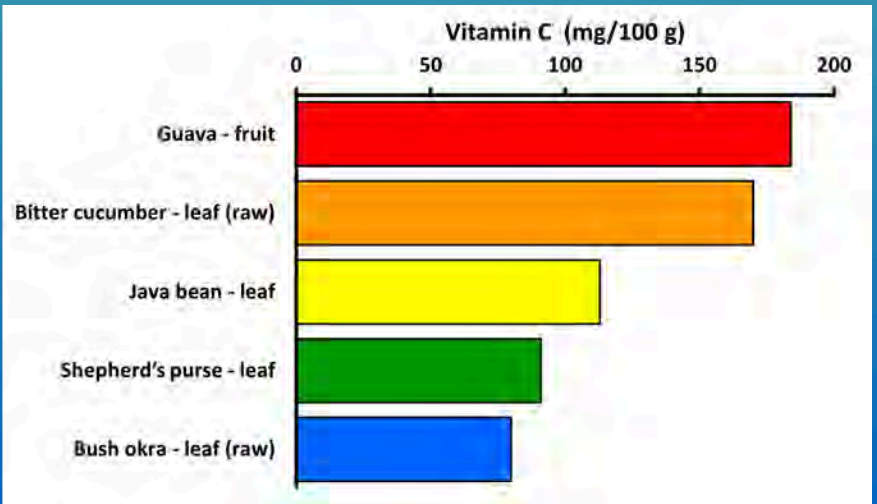
Vitamin C also increases our absorption of iron from food.



Guava



Bitter cucumber



Iron for healthy blood

Iron is important for making blood. It is what makes our blood red.

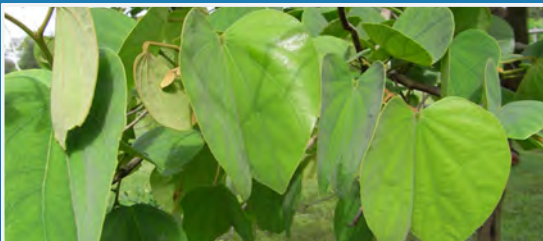
Iron helps oxygen get from our lungs to the rest of our body, allowing us to work.

When we are short of iron we are called anaemic.
Iron intake increases when vitamin C is also present.

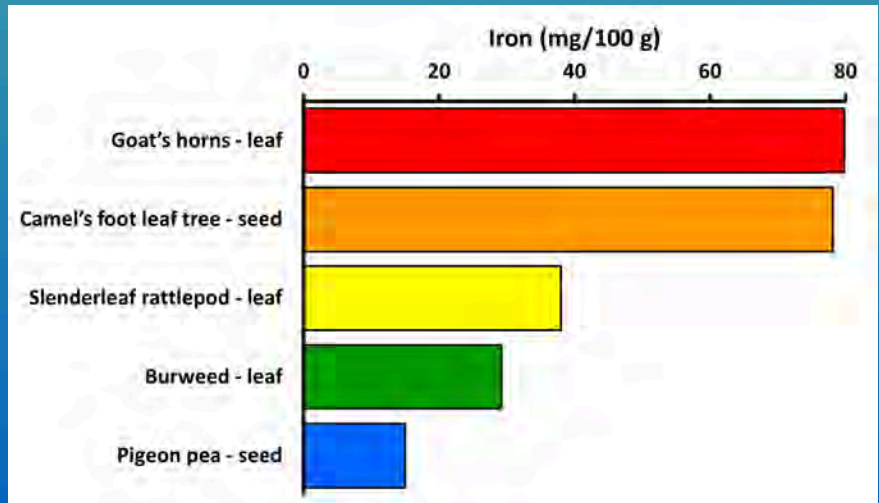
Soaking dried peas overnight before cooking them makes the iron more available.



Goat's horns



Camel's foot leaf tree



Zinc for growing bodies

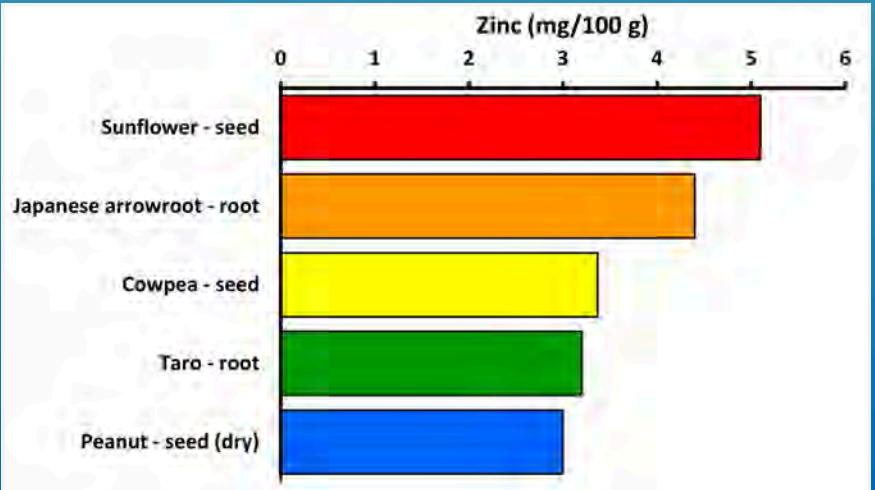
Zinc is particularly important for overall health, growth and immunity, especially in children and teenagers.



Sunflower



Japanese arrowroot



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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 from the Food Plants International database (Welcome - Food Plants International).

Acknowledgement is given for images of the following plants sourced from the internet.

Scientific name	Common name	Image URL
<i>Momordica charantia</i>	Bitter cucumber	https://www.pexels.com/photo/vibrant-bitter-melon-vines-in-lush-greenery-34122592/
<i>Dolichos trilobus</i>	Japanese arrowroot	http://www.pittwateronlinenews.com/resources/Dipogon-lignosus1.jpg?timestamp=1398817248961
<i>Tylosema fassoglensis</i>	Marama bean	http://palkowitschia.cz/sukulenty/img/travelling/kenya/flora/Tylosema%20fassoglensis%20Ghazi%20Kenya%202014_0192.jpg
<i>Triumfetta cordifolia</i>	Burweed	https://live.staticflickr.com/4092/5197206427_8540c1d056_b.jpg
<i>Sphenostylis stenocarpa</i>	African yam bean	https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/4/48/Sphenostylis_angustifolia%2C_veldblomstappie%2C_Faerie_Glen_NR%2C_a.jpg/1200px-Sphenostylis_angustifolia%2C_veldblomstappie%2C_Faerie_Glen_NR%2C_a.jpg

Notes

Notes



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