



UNIVERSITY OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, URBAN SUSTAINABILITY
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Cooperative Extension Service - Ethnic Crops Program - Fact Sheet

The ethnic makeup of the United States is changing rapidly. Currently, over 31% of Americans are considered ethnic, with the largest ethnic groups being Hispanics, African Americans and Asian Americans. This cultural diversity mirrors increasing consumer demand throughout the United States for healthy and flavorful international menu options. Due to increased ethnic diversity and global travel in recent years, the burgeoning North American ethnic food sector has moved out of the specialty food category and into the mainstream food industry. In fact, 75% of ethnic food consumption in the United States is now supported by the mainstream population, fuelling a \$75 billion annual industry that accounts for \$1 out of every \$7 spent on groceries.

The popularity of ethnic foods in North America is projected to continue along its current growth pattern: ethnic food products makeup more than 12% of all retail food sales and are seeing 5% annual growth. This development will be supported further by the United States' projected visible minority population of 123.1 million (i.e. roughly one in three Americans) by 2020, a 30% increase over the country's 2006 population of



Gboma - a popular W. African vegetable. The leaves and the fruit are eaten.



Avuro - Highly prized leafy green

94.4 million. The majority of this increase (i.e. roughly 59%) is expected to be driven by Hispanics, followed by African Americans (i.e. 23%) and Asian Americans (i.e. 18%). The world's largest ethnic food market is expected to see its ethnic consumer base continue to grow. Ethnic consumers are forecast to account for 52% of the American population by 2050 or 219.7 million consumers, an impressive 78% increase over the country's estimated 2020 population.

Urban development and rapid population growth are having a significant impact on mid-Atlantic farmers and farming practices. Remaining farmers must adapt to these changes in order to survive in this competitive market. Many farmers are looking at high-value crops, as well as alternative marketing strategies, innovative management planning and value-added enterprises, to make the difference between success and failure. Ethnic and specialty produce presents a significant opportunity for mid-Atlantic farmers-as high-value alternative crops and an excellent source of income.

For consumers, ethnic produce is not only a source of food and fiber but also a source of cultural values in a foreign land. These products can be produced by farmers in the region and sold through wholesalers, retail grocery stores, farmers' markets, and restaurants. **The primary goal of this program is to make ethnic produce and specialty foods more readily available to members of the local community. The nearest specialty crop farm is over an hour away from the Washington Metropolitan Area (WMA).**



Edible hibiscus – adds a tangy taste to salad or fish

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Crops	Fruits Yield Fresh weight	Price Per lb (\$)	Fruits Yield Value Per Acre	Leaves Yield Fresh weight	Price Per lb (\$)	Leaves Yield Value Per Acre	Total Yield Value Per Ac (\$)	Total Yield value per 1,000 sq. ft. (\$)
	(lbs/Ac)		(\$)	(lbs/Ac)		(\$)		
Gboma	26694	\$ 1.25	\$ 30,868	9296	\$ 1.75	\$ 16,269	\$ 47,137	\$1,082
Mixed Hot Peppers	21208	\$ 1.25	\$ 26,510	0	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 26,510	\$ 608
Kettleley	6101	\$ 1.25	\$ 7,626	0	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7,626	\$ 175
Garden Eggs (white)	31086	\$ 1.25	\$ 38,857	0	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 38,857	\$ 892
Garden Eggs (purple)	13364	\$ 1.25	\$ 16,705	0	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 16,705	\$ 383
Hibiscus	15688	\$ 1.25	\$ 19,610	9877	\$ 1.75	\$ 17,286	\$ 36,896	\$ 847
Sweet Peppers (Pimento)	22951	\$ 1.25	\$ 28,689	0	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 28,689	\$ 658
Sweet Peppers (White)	11040	\$ 1.25	\$ 13,800	0	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 13,800	\$ 316
Sweet Potato Leaves	0	\$ 1.25	\$ -	7626	\$ 1.75	\$ 13,346	\$ 13,346	\$ 306

Table shows ethnic crops yields from demonstration plots at UDC Muirkirk Ag Research Farm in Beltsville, MD and dollar value per acre and 1,000 square feet.

For additional information, please contact (202) 274-7115

In cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and District of Columbia Government, Cooperative Extension Service and Agricultural Experiment Station programs and employment opportunities are available to all people regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status or family status.



Avuvo as referred to in Togo, West Africa (sp. *Celosia argentea*)

Celosia argentea (a.k.a. Avuvo, Lagos spinach, quail grass, Soko, feather cockscomb) is a broadleaf leaf vegetable belonging to the Amaranth family (Amaranthaceae). It grows widespread across northern South America, tropical Africa, the West Indies, South, East and Southeast Asia where it is grown as a native or naturalized wildflower, and is cultivated as a nutritious leafy green vegetable.

Garden Eggs (sp. *Solanum aethiopicum*)

Garden Egg is also known as African eggplant, mock tomato, ngogwe or nyanya chungu. The leaves are eaten as a leaf vegetable and are more nutritious than the fruit. The fruit of the plant is eaten both raw and cooked. Garden egg is one of the most important vegetable crops grown in West Africa, especially in Ghana.



Jamma Jamma (Huckleberry)

(sp. *Solanum scabrum*)

Huckleberry occurs as a cultivated vegetable from Liberia to Ethiopia, and south to Mozambique and South Africa. It is very common in lowland as well as highland regions in West and East Africa. Jamma Jamma is a type of leafy green vegetable that is prepared in much the same way as mustard and collard greens. Other local names for Huckleberry are Yoruba's in Nigeria it's Ogunmo, in Kiswahili it's called Mnavu, in southern Nigeria it's called Ewa, in Uganda it's referred to as Nsugga, and in Cameroon, the people use the name Jammajamma.





Jute Leaf (sp. *Corchorus olitorius*)

Jute Leaf is grown in tropical Africa as a wild or cultivated vegetable. It is a leading leaf vegetable in Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, Nigeria, Cameroon, Sudan, Kenya, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

Jute Leaf or (Jew's mallow) is also cultivated as a leaf vegetable in the Caribbean, Brazil, India, Bangladesh, China, Japan, Egypt and the Middle East.



Hibiscus Sorrel
(sp. *Hibiscus sabdariffa*)
Sawa Sawa

Sawa Sawa means “sour leaf” in Sierra Leone, West Africa. The hibiscus sabdariffa is a shrub-like plant that has many branches. It is a broad annual that has deep green leaves that are about 6 inches in width. The leaves consist of five slender lobes are edible as green leafy vegetable in salads or cooked as greens alone or in combination with other vegetables or with meat or fish. The flowers are traditionally used for tea in Asia and Africa.





**Hot Pepper, Scotch Bonnet Peppers
(sp. *Capsicum chinense*)**

Scotch Bonnet is a type of Habanero, considered one of the hottest pepper in the world. Scotch Bonnet peppers are among the most intensely hot of all peppers with a Scoville rating that starts out around 150,000 and can climb as high as 300,000 in carefully cultivated specimens.

Scotch Bonnet peppers are grown in Jamaica, the Caribbean, and Guyana, but used primarily in Latin American cuisine.





Waterleaf (Purslane Plant)

(sp. *Talinum triangulare*)

Waterleaf is a leafy vegetable. It is grown in West Africa, the West Indies, South and Southeast Asia, and the warm parts of North America and South America. Common names include cariru, Surinam purslane, Philippine spinach, Ceylon spinach, Florida spinach, potherb fameflower, Lagos bologi, and sweetheart.





Gboma (sp. *Solanum macrocarpon*)

Gboma is also known as African eggplant, aubergine, and Scarlet eggplant. Gboma is grown in many West African countries and probably occurs in all coastal countries. It is also widespread in Central and East Africa. In southern Africa it has been recorded as a vegetable in Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Several fruit cultivars can also be found in South America (Suriname) and the Caribbean.



Kitely

(sp. *Solanum macrocarpon*)

Gilo

It looks like a strange cross between a tiny eggplant and a green tomato. Gilo is originally from Africa and was brought to Brazil with the slave trade. It is still grown in West Africa where in some countries it is known as "garden eggs".