



## A SURVEY OF LEAF AND FLOWER VEGETABLES IN WEST BENGAL

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### ABSTRACT

A survey in different districts of W. Bengal have been conducted to identify the leaf and flower vegetables. Leaves of 80 taxa and flowers of 22 taxa are generally used as vegetables in this state.

### INTRODUCTION

The leaf vegetable commonly known as 'sak' or 'sag' in Bengali becomes almost a part of daily vegetable among the people of West Bengal due to its huge availability and low price in the market. The 'Sak' is eaten with rice after frying or making curry with other vegetables, fishes and with pulse 'dal'. During famine it becomes the principal food among the poor.

The uses of edible leaves as food have been referred in the ancient literatures. In 'Charak Sutra', which was written not later than 1000 B.C., it is mentioned that the leaf vegetables are hard to digest and produce wind in the stomach. But if it is cooked after boiling and leaving the boiled water than the above mentioned bad effect would not occur. In sixteenth century, a Bengali literate Raghunandan mentioned the uses of 14 types of leaf vegetables in his book 'Kritta Tatyā'. These are the leaves of *Amorphophallus campanulatus* Bl.), *Costus speciosus* Sm.), 'Beto'

(*Chenopodium album* L.), 'Kalkasunde' (*Cassia tora* L.), 'Sarisa' (*Brassica campestris* L.), 'Nim' (*Azadirachta indica* L.), 'Jayanti' (*Sesbania sesban* Juss.), 'Sanche' (*Alternanthera sessilis* Br.), 'Guruchi' (*Tinospora cordifolia* Miers), 'Patol' (*Trichosanthes dioica* Miers), 'Seluka' (*Cordia dichotoma* Roxb.), 'Hincha' (*Enydra fluctuans* Lour.), 'Ghentu' (*Clerodendron infortunatum* Gaertn.), 'Susni' (*Marsilea quadrifolia* L.).

The leaf vegetables i.e. the young stems and leaves contain vitamins, minerals etc. and due to the presence of huge amount of fibres it is having laxative properties.

The flowers of some species are also used as vegetables and these are very palatable.

### PROCEDURE

The local markets of different districts

of West Bengal have been surveyed to identify the species whose leaves and flowers are used as vegetables. The samples have been collected and identified at CAL. In some cases informations have been gathered from the local people. The species are arranged in alphabetical order with the name of the family, Bengali name as well as whether it is cultivated or wild.

### Enumeration of leaf vegetables

- Allium cepa* L., Liliaceae; *Pianj*; cult.
- A. sativum* L., Liliaceae; *Rasum, Lasun*; cult.
- Alternanthera sessilis* (L.) DC.,  
Amaranthaceae; *Sanche*; wild.
- A. philot-emides* (Mart.) Griseh.,  
Amaranthaceae; *Sanche*; wild.
- Amaranthus blitum* L., Amaranthaceae;  
*Sadanotiya*; wild.
- A. blitum* L. var. *oleracea* Duthie,  
Amaranthaceae; *Notiyasag*; cult.
- A. caudatus* L., Amaranthaceae; *Notya*; cult.
- A. spinosus* L., Amaranthaceae; *Kanta notya*;  
wild.
- A. tricolor* L., Amaranthaceae; *Lal sag*; cult.
- Amorphophallus campanulatus* Bl. ex Decne.,  
Araceae; 01; cult. Young leaf and stem.
- Asteracantha longifolia* Nees, Acanthaceae;  
*Kulia khara*; wild.
- Azadirachta indica* A. Juss., Meliaceae; Nim;  
cult.
- Bacopa monnieri* (L.) Pennell, Scrophulariaceae;  
*Brihmi-sak*; wild.
- Basella nlnb* L., Basellaceae; Poi; wild, cult.
- B. nlnb* L. var. *rubra* (L.) Stewart, Basellaceae;  
*Lal poi*; cult.
- Benincasa hispida* (Thunb.) Cogn.,  
Cucurbitaceae; *chalkumra*; cult.
- Beta vulgaris* L., Chenopodiaceae; Beet; cult
- B. vulgaris* L. var. *orientalis* (Roth.) Maq. in DC.  
Prodr. 13(2) : 56. 1849; Palang; cult.
- Boerhavia diffusa* L., Nyctaginaceae;  
Punarnaba; wild.
- Brassica oleracea* L. var. *botrys* L., Brassicaceae;  
*Phulkapi*; cult.
- B. oleracea* L. var. *capitata* L.f., Brassicaceae;  
*Bandhakapi*; cult.
- B. oleracea* L. var. *gongyloides* L., Brassicaceae;  
Olkapi; cult.
- B. oleracea* L. var. *rapa* L., Brassicaceae;  
*Salgam*; cult.
- B. napus* L., Brassicaceae; *Sarse*; cult.
- Cassia tora* L., Papilionaceae; *Kalkasunde*,  
*Chakenda*; wild.
- Celaesia argentea* L., Amaranthaceae;  
*Swetmurga*; wild., cult.
- Centella asiatica* (L.) Urban, Apiaceae;  
*Thankuni*; wild.
- Chenopodium album* L., Chenopodiaceae;  
Befhua; wild.
- C. arnbrosioides* L., Chenopodiaceae; *Bethu*;  
wild.
- Cicer arietinum* L., Papilionaceae; Cizola; cult.
- Cinnamomum tamala* Nees & Eberm.,  
Lauraceae; Tejpaf; cult. Leaves are used to  
flavour curries.
- Coccinia indica* Wt. & Arn., Cucurbitaceae;  
*Telakucha*; wild.
- Colocasia antiquorum* Schott, Araceae; *Kachu*;  
cult.
- C. esculenta* (L.) Schott., Araceae; *Kachu*; wild.
- Corchorus capsularis* L., Tiliaceae; *Pat*; cult.
- C. olitorius* L., Tiliaceae; *Pat*; cult., wild.
- Coriandrum sativum* L., Apiaceae; *Dhane*; cult.
- Cucurbita maxima* Duchesne, Cucurbitaceae;  
*kumra*; cult.

- C. pepo* L., Cucurbitaceae; Kumra; cult.
- Dendrocalamus strictus* (Roxb.) Nees  
Gramineae; Bans; cult., wild., young shoot is edible.
- Diplazium esculentum* Sev., Polypodiaceae; Dhenki-sag; wild.
- Elydra fluctuans* Lour., Asteraceae; Hingcha; wild.
- Holostemma annularis* K. Schum, Asclepiadaceae; Apung; wild.
- Ipomoea aquatica* Forssk., Convolvulaceae; Kalmi-sag; wild, cult.
- I. batatas* (L.) Lam, Convolvulaceae, Ranga-alu; cult
- Lactuca sativa* L., Asteraceae; Kahu, Lettuce; cult.
- Lagenaria siceraria* (Mol.) Standl., Cucurbitaceae; Lar; cult.
- Lathyrus sativus* L., Papilionaceae; Khesari; cult.
- Leucas lavandulaefolia* Rees, Lamiaceae; Halkusa; wild.
- Malva verticillata* L. Malvaceae; Lepha, Napha; wild.
- Marsilea minuta* L., Marsileaceae; Susni; wild.
- Melochia corchorifolia* L., Sterculiaceae; Lal-pat; wild.
- Melilotus alba* Desr., Papilionaceae; Sada Ban methi; wild.
- M. indica* (L.) All., Papilionaceae; Ban-mathi; wild.
- Mentha arvensis* L., Lamiaceae; Pudina; cult.
- M. spicata* L., Lamiaceae; Pahari-Pudina; cult.
- Mollugo cerviana* Ser., Aizoaceae; Ginla-sag; wild.
- M. pentaphylla* L., Aizoaceae; Julpapra; Wild.
- Momo-dica charantia* L. Cucurbitaceae; Karela; cult.
- Moringa oleifera* Lam., Moringaceae; Sajina; cult.
- Murraya hoenigii* Spreng., Rutaceae; Barsunga; cult. wild.
- Leaves are used to flavour the curries and chutneys.
- Nyctanthes arbor-tristis* L., Oleaceae; Suli; cult.
- Oxalis corniculata* L. Oxalidaceae; Amrul; wild.
- Paederia foetida* L, Rubiaceae; Gendal; wild.
- Pisum sativum* L., Papilionaceae; Matar; wild.
- Polygonum glabrum* Willd., Polygonaceae, Bihagni; wild.
- P. plebejum* R.Br., Polygonaceae; Chihni-sag; wild.
- Randia spinosa* Poir, Rubiaceae; Mainphal; wild.
- Raphanus sativus* L., Braesicaceae; Mulo; cult.
- Rumex vesicarius* L., Polygonaceae; Tak-palang; wild.
- Sechium edule* Sw., Cucurbitaceae; Dugi-sag; cult. wild.
- Solanum tuberosum* L., Solanaceae; Alu; cult.
- Spinacin oleracea* L., Chenopodiaceae; Palang; cult.
- Tamarindus indica* L., Caesalpiniaceae; Tetul; cult., wild.
- Trianthema portulacastrum* L., Aizoaceae; Swetsapuna; wild.
- Trichosanthes dioica* Ronb., Cucurbitaceae; Palta; cult
- Trigonella corniculata* L., Papilionaceae; Piring; wild.
- T. foenum-graecum* L., Papilionaceae; Methi; wild.
- Typhonium trilobatum* (L.) Schott., Araceae; Ghatkol; wild.
- Vangueria spinosa* Ronb., Rubiaceae; Muyuna; wild.

## Enumeration of Flower vegetables

*Aeschynomene aspera* L., Papilionaceae; Shola; wild.

*Aeschynomene indica* L., Papilionaceae; Shola; wild.

*Alocasia indica* Spach, Araceae; Mankachu; cult.

*Artocarpus heterophyllus* Lam., Moraceae; Kanthal; cult.

*Azadirachta indica* A. Juss., Meliaceae; *Nim*; Cult. and escape.

Dried flowers are preserved and used in curry.

*Basella alba* L., Basellaceae; Poi; cult.

*B. alba* L. var. *rubra* (L.) Stewart, Basellaceae; *Lal-poi*; cult.

*Brassica oleracea* L. var. *botrytis* L., Brassicaceae; *Phulkapi*; cult.

*Cassia tora* L., Papilionaceae; Kalhasunde, *Chakunda*; wild.

*Colocasia esculenta* (L.) Schott, Araceae; *Kachu*; cult.

*Cucurbita maxima* Danches, Cucurbitaceae; *Kumra*; cult.

*Dillenia indica* L., Dilleniaceae; *Chalta*; cult,

wild. Fleshy sepals are used as pickles.

*Dregea volubilis* Benth. ex Hook.f., Asclepiadaceae; *Jukti Phul*; wild.

*Ficus cunia* Ham. ex Roxb., Moraceae; *Dumur*; wild.

*Hibiscus sabdariffa* L., Malvaceae; *Tak-Dheras*; cult. Fleshy calyx is used as pickles.

*Madhuca indica* J.F. Gmel, Sapotaceae; *Mahua*; cult., wild.

*Moringa oleifera* Lamk., Moringaceae; *Sajina*; cult. ■

*Musa paradisiaca* L., Musaceae; *Kela*; cult.

*Nymphaea nauchali*, Nymphaeaceae; *Saluk*; wild. Long fleshy pedicel is used as curry.

*Sesbania grandiflora* Pers., Papilionaceae; *Bakphul*; cult.

*Spondias mangifera* Willd. Anacardiaceae; *Amra*; cult.

*Typhonium trilobatum* (L.) Schott, Araceae; *Ghatkol*; mild.

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