

The Importance of Grain Amaranth

Elibariki Kisimbo, Empower Tanzania, Inc.

In Partnership with Rural Tanzania

Introduction

Grain amaranth is a small seeded pseudo-cereal that produces a grain which is highly nutritious. It has potential for food security and nutrition improvement.

Amaranth grain contains a high level of protein, between 16% - 18%, much more than any other cereal. This high level of protein is important to Tanzania, and the developing world, because of their rapid demographic growth and regional desertification. This is in contrast to the developed world which often has diets excessively high in protein.

The quality of protein found in amaranth makes it worthy of consideration as one of the most promising plants available to address the food and nutrition crisis in developing countries.



Grain Amaranth is an Important Food Source for:

- Pregnant women needing extra **iron** and **calcium**
- Babies needing nutritional supplements **to thrive**
- People who are **Anemic** and **Diabetic**
- People who need more **Fiber** and **Protein** in their diet
- People with a low or compromised **immune system**
- A complete protein source for vegetarians



*Amaranth flour being prepared as a porridge for **HIV/AIDS patients** and **vulnerable children** with malnutrition problems.*

In addition grain amaranth contains high levels of minerals, especially iron, calcium, phosphorus and magnesium. These levels are generally higher than what is found in animal products like milk and meat. Vitamins contained in amaranth include vitamins A,C,E and some B vitamins.

Grain amaranth flour can be used as a supplement in preparing various traditional dishes such as:

- Porridge
- Bread
- Cakes
- Maize meal (ugali)
- Pancakes
- Donuts and biscuits



Popping Amaranth

The seeds can be popped like popcorn and used in a similar way to supplement these dishes or eaten directly or mixed with honey to make a nutritious candy bar. (This is done in Mexico as "Allegrias")



Nyumba Ya Mungu Pastor with most Vulnerable children (MVC) after receiving amaranth flour. Oct 2011