

Discover Newssheet
for colleagues in Africa
September 2020
Food security II



Dear Friends

I received a variety of responses to my last newsletter on the theme of food security:

- Thank you so much. I have made 1000 copies and distributed them to small-scale farmers in the community.
- Domestic violence needs serious attention.
- A farmer in Cameroon told me “the four basic foods that one needs to be healthy are grain sorghum, black eyed peas (niebbe), peanuts and moringa leaves!”
- You did not mention *Artemisia annua* for treating malaria and possibly the corona virus.
- Many thanks – it was very informative.
- New research indicates that honey is good for symptomatic relief in upper respiratory tract infections.
- Your newsletter was inspiring. Recent floods have given rise to cholera.

I would like to share with you the advice of a very experienced agriculturalist from the USA, Roland Bunch. He was talking about Kenya, but I think his advice will certainly apply to Uganda and possibly other countries too. On the theme of green cover crops:

*“In the Kenyan context, I would think that, by far, the best species in most of the country under 1,500 metres in elevation would be lablab beans (*Lablab purpureum*, often called “black beans” in English, or “njahe” in Swahili). These can be intercropped with maize, planting them at the same time as the maize, with no need to prune them. In fact, they can save a lot of labour, because they completely, or almost completely, eliminate the need for a second weeding of the maize. These beans are native to East Africa and have about 50% more protein than the common beans that came from Europe. The beans (if one is using the black-coloured varieties, which one should in Kenya) can be sold in local markets at a good price because the Kikuyu people consume tons and tons of lablab beans. These beans are totally edible and are delicious when well-prepared (learn how to cook them from the Kikuyu people). The plants are a wonderful fodder for animals--cattle prefer lablab fodder to almost anything you can give them. But perhaps even more interesting is that the lablab leaves are edible for humans, just like cowpea leaves. Picked young and tender, these leaves can be boiled for five minutes, rolled into balls about 2 cm in diameter, dried in tree shade for about three days, and then stored for up to a full year in old fertilizer sacks. These leaves are tremendously nutritious, providing large amounts of vitamins, minerals and proteins, available all year long, and are virtually free, being a by-product of the production of the beans. They are a nutritionist's dream come true. For maximum soil improvement, do not kill the plants until it is time to plant the next maize or sorghum crop, because the leaves must be green, not brown, to fertilize the maize well.*”

But lablab will only grow well when the soils are in fairly good shape (able to produce at least 1 ton per hectare of maize without the use of fertilizer). If the soils are not that good, then we must use some other bean to improve the soil until we can grow the lablab well. By far the best bean for rejuvenating degraded soils is the jackbean (Canavalia ensiformis), a big white bean”.

What do you think of this advice? If you wish, I can send you a much longer report by Roland Bunch which describes nine case studies of “regenerative agriculture”. Let me know if you would like to receive it.

Other news

1. Discover Zimbabwe has produced a tincture based on *Artemisia annua* and other local herbs which is proving very successful in treating the symptoms of COVID-19. Discover Zimbabwe is being encouraged to register their products so that they can be widely available throughout the country.

Congratulations to Discover Zimbabwe Trust! The picture shows some members of their team with some of their beautifully packaged herbal products.



2. The Fweny (Discover) group in South Nyanza, Kenya, has been active conducting training despite all the challenges presented by the pandemic. The group taught the members of six Adventist Churches:

- COVID-19 prevention, including drinking a glass of artemisia tea every day.
- Hygiene (personal and environmental).
- Healthy eating.
- How to make and use a tip tap.
- Common natural medicines, especially *Artemisia annua* and lemon grass.

The picture shows another group Fweny trained, volunteers with the Medical Missionary Movement. They are standing in front of a very solid fuel saving stove.



With my best wishes

Keith Lindsey