

RIG NETWORK

Snapshot of food garden plants – preferences and suggestions

The 2009 RIG Information Survey and Garden Profile Survey asked people to tell us about what garden food plants they have found to be popular - and not so popular - in their communities – and why?!

Below is a quick snapshot of what people told us – people mostly from the top end. We'd love to hear about plant preferences, and tips for preparation and use of produce, that you and your community have found to be effective and popular.

We also asked survey participants whether or not they thought communities are able to access adequate information about the types of food plants that are best for their local environment.

Over 66% of participants said its hard to find good information about suitable plants!

We'd love to hear from you what food plants work well in gardens where you are!

Fruits and veggies that people have mentioned to us that are popular were:

- Fruits and sweet potatoes most commonly suggested as popular – along with chillies and lemon!
- Some well known veggies listed as popular, but generally perhaps not as popular as fruits, and leafy green veggies aren't so popular unless people are taught how to cook and use them.
- Generally, all well received if supported by appropriate introduction and education around use and context.

Chillies Lemon myrtle Tamarind Cashew (weedy coconut) Herbs	Sweet potatoe (white not red) Yams (similar purple sweet potatoe) Cucumbers Apple cucumbers Tomato Cherry tomatoes (kids love them!) Cauliflower Pumpkin Cassava Sweet corn Beans/Snakebeans Carrots	Banana Mango Melon/ rockmelon Oranges/Citrus Papaya/Paw Paw Pineapple Quandong Watermelons Strawberries Star fruit Mulberry Passionfruit Fig Grapes	Bush tomato Gubinge Bush passionfruit Yams
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Other things produced that people mentioned in association with their gardens included bees and chickens.

When we asked if people had found particular fruits and vegetables to be ‘not so popular’, and asked ‘why’, people offered the following comments:

- All well received, if supported by appropriate introduction and education around use and context.
- “Kale! We had so much that we couldn’t give it away and I think we weren’t adventurous enough in preparing it”
- Mostly things that need a lot of preparation or are not familiar – eg. Zucchini
- Egg plant, Asian veg. Generally species that are not recognizable to Aboriginal Australians (though we’ve also heard egg plant made into babagonoush and used with damper can be very popular!)
- Cabbage, lettuce, spinach (any leafy green varieties).
- It depends on the community and local history. A lot of people have not been exposed to things like zucchini, squash, leafy green vegetables etc.