

# WEEDIBLES WEEDICINALS

PLUS EDIBLE FLOWERS AND MORE



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This book is basically a plant book. It is not intended to be a substitute for advice of a health care professional. Herbal remedies should not be used as replacement for medicine without the advice of a specialist who is trained and authorized by the medical signatory agency to do so. Readers, especially pregnant women and persons under medication, should not take any herbal remedy without consulting a doctor. Stay healthy!



Weedibles, Weedicinals Plus Edible Flowers and More  
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Flor's Garden takes this saying to heart. We believe that food as medicine and medicine as food has been a powerful approach to good health and healing. Stay in the pink by keeping your greens!



## MESSAGES

WILLIAM D. DAR, PH.D.

*Secretary*

*Department of Agriculture*

**T**he COVID-19 crisis is deepening uncertainties of securing nutritious and adequate food for the nation. But Flor Tarriela's book emerges with a trove of ideas and stories on plants promising hope to the millions of hungry.

With her fascinating story-telling and her enchanting garden, Flor Tarriela captivates with an easy appreciation of the robust power of plants in sustainably feeding a growing population, of food of high nutritional value, and therapeutic relief thanks to their medicinal properties.

Indeed, our plants can be the biggest enabler for the poor to have greater access to food and medicines.

With a diversity of 14,000 species, Philippine flora is said to represent 5% of the world's flora. The heft of our local biodiversity then compels DA to scour hotspots in search of edibles.

In her book, Flor expressly supported the DA's Plant, Plant, Plant Program, our flagship pandemic recovery response towards long-term food security and prosperity

and resilience among our farmers. We have been making significant strides in implementing this program, through which we aim to effect a wide-scale mindset change centered in turn on our OneDA Reform Agenda for 2021. The latter is our move to transform the sector towards modernization, industrialization, consolidation, and professionalization.

But with the support of people like Flor, we can accelerate our thrusts, especially in planting our own food.

We hope the message of this book, that is, to value our plants as our most prized resource, goes beyond its pages, and onward to shaping minds and encouraging heightened crop planting activities.

Reading the book, I recalled the words of global food policy analyst Dennis Avery: “No one will starve to save a tree.” Let me end with my own spin to this quote: “No one will starve to save the weeds.”

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W.D. Dar', with a checkmark-like flourish at the end.

WILLIAM D. DAR, Ph.D.





## ALFREDO S. ATÓN, MPS-DM

*Director IV*

*Agricultural Training Institute*

Being nurturing is one of the traits Filipinos are known for. This is evident in how we care for our family and friends. Even our homes benefit from this caring nature and is witnessed through our well-maintained gardens and plants that receive tender love and care. In a typical home garden, no overgrown bush is tolerated and weeds are certainly not welcome. But, should these unwanted weeds remain unwanted?

It is with much privilege and honor to present to you *Weedibles, Weedicinals Plus Edible Flowers and More* by Flor's Garden and Nature Haven, Inc. together with the ATI CALABARZON. This book is a compilation of common flowers and weeds and their medicinal benefits. Moreover, this book also documents the best practices and field learning experience of Flor's Garden and Nature Haven, Inc.

We at ATI hope that the learnings from this book will be beneficial to every home in finding alternative source of nutrients and medicinal plants. May this book also shed light on the value of often overlooked plants we call weeds. To all the plant lovers, we encourage all of you to take a second look at the flowers and weeds we remove in our pots and garden, these might actually be beneficial to our health.

ALFREDO S. ATÓN, MPS-DM

## MARITES PIAMONTE-COSICO

*Center Director*

*Agricultural Training Institute - Calabarzon*

Warmest greetings!

The Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) CALABARZON unveils one of its successful innovations as we share the latest publication of one of our active partners in the field of agricultural training and extension.

The ATI CALABARZON, together with Flor's Garden and Nature Haven, Inc., an Accredited National Private-Extension Service Provider, are proudly bringing you the *Weedibles, Weedicinals Plus Edible Flowers and More*. Our highest regard and congratulations to the author, Flor Tarriela, Flor's Garden and Nature Haven Inc., for their untiring efforts, founding their roots as formerly ATI CALABARZON's certified Learning Site for Agriculture and Regional Private-Extension Service Provider. My utmost gratitude also to all those behind this book for making it happen.

This book serves as a guide on the health and medicinal benefits of weeds and other plants commonly thriving in the Philippines. It provides a holistic and healthy alternative for the use of weeds and other plants, which are often overlooked and regarded as insignificant. Furthermore, this material is a compilation of the author's best practices and field learning experiences.

Read, learn and discover the exceptional value of WEEDIBLES and WEEDICINALS as we peer through the pages.



MARITES PIAMONTE - COSICO

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## FOREWORD

By Dr. Jaime Galvez Tan

As a medical doctor who advocates holistic healing and natural medicine, I have discovered many plants, grass, shrubs, and trees, which many of us have considered wild or weeds that are really edible, delicious, and tasty. What a delight to share with you such discoveries!

My friendship with Flor Tarriela started more than a decade ago when I visited Flor's Garden in Antipolo. I immediately got mesmerized by the beautiful landscape of medicinal plants, shrubs, trees, vegetables, and fruits—nature at its best in the hands of Flor.

Flor introduced to me how to eat the *talinum* (*Talinum fruticosum*), *pipinong ligaw* (*Melothria pendula*) and surprisingly blue-colored rice cooked with blue ternate flowers (*Clitoria ternate*). It has always been a great culinary experience having lunch and *merienda* served by Chef Gil, with all the ingredients freshly picked from Flor's Garden.

Flor and I eventually partnered in offering more varieties of seminars, workshops, learning experiences, and cooking demonstrations to promote holistic health and wellness, using what was in her vast garden and magnificent forest.

In my early years as a doctor in the far flung rural areas of Samar, I discovered the edible and medicinal grass called by the Warays as “*yahong-yahong*.” This grass was growing in all of the barangays that I visited, indeed, available and accessible. Its scientific name is *Centella asiatica* and in Tagalog, *Takipkuhol*. After doing more research to ensure *Takipkuhol* was safe and non-toxic, I started loving to eat it raw as a salad

and use its decoction for my patients with swelling due to edema, and for hypertension and kidney diseases.

As a community health doctor in the Cordilleras, Negros Island, and Mindanao, I took a keen interest in getting to know more wild vegetables and fruits that have been eaten by Filipinos for centuries yet are not sold in ordinary wet markets because they just grow everywhere and can be picked on demand. I have re-discovered *kolitis* (*Amaranthus viridis*), *pansit-pansitan* (*Peperomia pellucida*), paco (*Diplazium esculentum*), *olasiman-bato* (*Portulaca oleracea*), *talbos ng kamoteng kahoy* (*Manihot esculenta*), the leaves of *alagaw* trees (*Premna odorata*), the young shoots of mango (*Mangifera indica*), the red, pink and white flowers of *katuray* (*Sesbania grandiflora*), and the wild cherries of *bignay* (*Antedemus bunius*), *lipote* (*Syzygium polycephaloides*) and *hagis* (*Syzygium tripinnatum*).

Three years ago, I lived with the B'laans, the indigenous people of South Cotabato. I discovered an entirely new array of vegetables, eaten by the B'laans daily, which are nowhere in my list of vegetables. Being a vegetarian for more than three (3) decades now, I have truly enjoyed the unique taste of the *kawat* (*Mollugo verticillata*) *kalu* or torch ginger (*Etingera elatior*), *iskelaan faet* (*Solanum aethiopicum*), and the refreshing water from the trunk of the *lumit* tree (*Ficus minahassae*).

Our loving God has faithfully provided all these weedibles and so much more, for our highest good and for His good purpose. You'll be amazed by how God uniquely created the weedibles as weedicinals—plants and trees that have “dual purposes.” Now, the challenge is to use these as part of your lifestyle. As you read through this book, I pray that you will be encouraged to plant weedibles in ways you have not done before. To God be all the glory!

  
DR. JAIME GALVEZ TAN

# ABOUT THE BOOK

In line with Secretary of Agriculture William Dar's "Plant, Plant, Plant Program," we are pleased to introduce: *Weedibles, Weedicinals Plus Edible Flowers and More* to benefit everyone especially farmers, consumers, even urban and condo dwellers. Plants have often been used to promote health and wellness, as well as cure some illness. Eating fresh plants has many benefits and healing results.

This book is basically a plant book presented in simple language. The plants are just some of those we have in Flor's Garden that have value and benefits. They include *weedibles* (weeds that are edible) and *weedicinals* (weeds that are medicinal). We also included edible flowers and others. These plants are by no means complete. There are many more of them in our environment. Not a scientist, a doctor or an academic researcher, we present the benefits here based mainly on our own actual experiences, and those of others shared with us, and on our own research as a gardener.

We introduce information on the scientific and common English names of the plants and their food and health values. We also discussed how to propagate and care for them, as well as how to use them as simple home remedies internally and externally. We also provide some simple recipes and some guidance on how to wash vegetables, fruits, and leaves effectively.

We also present the top 10 medicinal plants approved by the Department of Health (DOH) and the Common Herbal Medicine Formulations by Dr. Jaime Galvez Tan.

This is not intended to be a medical book. Please consult a medical doctor for your medical needs.

Which plant is considered the Japanese ginseng? Or what plant is the herb of longevity and a memory enhancer? What leaves can you use to soothe a bump? Which flower can give you nutrients and your food a natural blue color? What plant is not just edible, but also medicinal and



called “malathion” plant, and used as insecticide against plants? Which plant can grow even if you just leave a leaf from it inside a book? These and many more questions are answered in this book.

We hope this book will help the reader be aware of some common plants, even lowly weeds, so that “No Filipino will be Hungry” but also be healthy. “We are what we eat. Let food be a substitute for our medicine (not medicine, our food).” We encourage readers to have some livelihood ideas, too.



# INTRODUCTION

Weeds are plants in the wrong place—growing where they are not wanted and where they should not be. But do you know that many weeds are useful? Weeds that are edible, we call “Weedibles” and weeds that are medicinal, “Weedicinals,” as coined by Sally Sabalbuero, a hobby natural farmer from La Union.

I got my love for gardening from my mother, Carolina “Arling” Gozon. Years ago, she planted some talinum in our garden, which grew lanky. I didn’t find them nice so I tried to throw them away. Coincidentally, my garden friends (Carmen Florento, Noni Dolera and Maur Lichauco) invited me to the garden of landscaper Yuyung Lao where Maur (eldest sister of Ninoy Aquino) pointed to the “lowly” *talinum*. She said it saved them during the Japanese time as it grew almost everywhere. Noni, a “walking encyclopedia on plants” said “*talinum* is rich in vitamin C.” Wow! With my ignorance, I would have thrown away a valuable plant. This inspired us to make the book *Ooops... Don’t Throw Those Weeds Away!* with the advocacy of “No Filipino Should Be Hungry” or “*Walang Pilipinong Dapat Magutom.*”

Since 2002 I started collecting the different plants and weeds introduced in the *Ooops... Don’t Throw Those Weeds Away* book. I grouped the edibles in the “Kitchen Garden” and the medicinals in the “*Botika* Garden.” They now form the “*Hardin ng Buhay*,” the centerpiece of Flor’s Garden.

Flor’s Garden, incorporated in 2012, is a five-hectare bird and butterfly sanctuary in Antipolo Rizal, an hour’s drive from Ortigas. It is an educational destination and an event place. Over the years, we have added more weeds and common plants to the collection, such as, *damong maria*, *kadok*, *tawa tawa*, *katakataka*, etc., which are now included in this book. The plants we included here are not complete but we hope they will serve as a good start. They are now available in Flor’s Garden plus many more and additional ones.

Many of our visitors express surprise about the usefulness of the weeds. Some even say, “Oh yes, we throw that away! But we will value them now.” A visiting school teacher from the US, Marita Pierce, who brought some preparatory kids to Flor’s Garden, exclaimed—“Oh, your plants are available as pills or capsules sold in drugstores in the US!”

Dr. Jaime Galvez Tan, former Secretary of Health, holds regular Health and Wellness seminars in Flor's Garden, focusing on the health benefits of edible plants and emphasizing prevention. Strengthening our immune system and prevention is still the "best medicine." Some topics discussed during the seminars are as follows: *Bagong Taon, Bagong Sekreto—Mga Gamot Walang Gastos*; *Resatang Menos Gastos* for Everyday Wellness; and Healing Herbs for Everyday Wellness. I particularly like Dr. Jimmy's SELF for wellness: **SLEEP, EXERCISE, LOVE and FORGIVE.**

Even before Flor's Garden was incorporated, we already started in 2010 Natural Farming and Gardening and later with J-A-D-A-M (Jayonu Damun Saramdul—means follow the wisdom of nature), the ultra-low-cost technology in farming with Andry Lim and Josephine Gamboa. This natural technology maximizes micro-organisms in the soil and does not use any manufactured fertilizers. The secret is in the soil, which is alive!

Flor's Garden is now a Department of Tourism-accredited agri-tourism site and a National Extension Service Provider (ESP) of the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) under the Department of Agriculture.

God is good... there is so much wealth in the garden. "No Filipino Should Go Hungry" and "Let Food be your Medicine." This is our intention in sharing with you our experiences and knowledge, as an aspiring and passionate gardener. We hope you will be encouraged to plant and grow your own food, be healthy, and share your knowledge with others.





# I. The WEEDIBLES and the WEEDICINALS

Genesis 1:29

*“Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed. It shall be food for you.”*

Weeds grow anywhere. They do not even need any care. Some are useful, edible, and with medicinal value. Such weeds in this book are by no means complete. There are so many others like them in the Philippines. Josephine Gamboa wanted to include insulin and snake plant. Dr. Jaime Galvez Tan has new found “weeds” in South Cotabato. We should include them and others, including those from you, the reader, in the next book!

Azolla  
Balbas pusa  
Borbotak  
Botones botonesan  
Damong Maria  
Kolitis  
Lupo lupo  
Makahiya  
Pansit-pansitan  
Pipinong Ligaw  
Sampa-sampalukan  
Takipkuhol  
Talinum  
Tanglad  
Tawa tawa



# Azolla

*Water Clover; Marsilea crenata*

*Azolla* is an aquatic plant that looks like a four-leaf clover. *Azolla* leaves are rich in Vitamin A and can be eaten raw as a vegetable. The young shoots can be eaten dipped in hot sauces. They are excellent feeds also for fishes and livestock. When *azolla* forms a dense “carpet” on water surfaces, it is considered a water weed in some areas.

## Propagation and care

This plant grows well in fresh, shallow ponds and practically doubles in three days! Use non-chlorinated water. The best is rain water. However, if only tap chlorinated water is available, let it stay in a container for at least three to seven days before using it depending on the size of the container or amount of water needed to weaken the chlorine content.

My first *azolla* died as I just placed it in a basin of water. Instead of multiplying, it became “sad” each day. Then I realized *azolla* is a plant that needs fertilizer, such as, vermicast or livestock dried manure to grow better. *Azolla* likes the sun but, during summer, the heat may be too much so a net is good to put over it.





# Balbas Pusa

*Cat's Whiskers; Orthosiphon aristatus*

*Balbas pusa* or cat's whiskers is a beautiful plant with white flowers just like cat's whiskers.

Called Java tea also, it is known to be an effective herbal medicine, with many health benefits and healing properties. Leaves, usually made as tea, help in dealing with hypertension, weight loss, reduce cholesterol, and sugar levels.

My *balae* Loreta Rivera, mom of my "daughter in love," Maggi, takes *balbas pusa* tea to control her sugar condition.

## Propagation and care

Propagate with stem cuttings. Grow in any type of soil. Water regularly and put under direct sun.



# Borbotak

*Painter's Brush Weed; Emilia sonchifolia*

*Borbotak* is a succulent weed with fleshy leaves. Its seeds are like floating balls of numerous silky white hairs like a painter's brush.

The leaves are used as a vegetable, which may be sautéed with meat and poultry and with option to add coconut milk. They are also good in soup with corn and *monggo*.

Once my sister Kay had unannounced visitors in Tagaytay, at almost lunch time. But she didn't have enough food. She remembered there were plenty of *borbotak* growing like weeds in her backyard. She had three cups of *borbotak* leaves gathered and added to her crabmeat omelette. With the *borbotak*, they had enough omelette for everyone. It was healthy and everyone loved it! Here's her recipe on the side column.

## Propagation and care

The *borbotak* plant produces seeds, which are simply carried by the wind. The seeds should be harvested before they are blown away. They can grow everywhere on any kind of soil and with direct sunlight.



## Crab Borbotak Omelette

*Kay Jimenez*

### **Ingredients:**

1 cup crabmeat  
3 cups *borbotak* leaves (cut in small pieces)  
3 eggs  
Clove of garlic  
1 small onion  
3 small tomatoes  
2 tablespoons cooking oil  
Salt and pepper to taste

### **Procedure:**

1. Saute garlic, onion, and tomatoes.
2. Mix crabmeat and *borbotak*.
3. Beat eggs well.
4. Put beaten eggs on a pan and shake it constantly while cooking.
5. When beaten eggs are set, add the *borbotak*, mix and fold into an omelette.
6. Serve hot.

**Note:** Add crunchy wild *pipino* as garnish to the omelette. Instead of crabmeat, chicken, ground pork and meat are alternatives.



# Botones-Botonesan

*Common Sedge; Cyperus brevifolius*

*Botones-botonesan* is the cover of the book *Ooops... Don't Throw Those Weeds Away!*

It is a common weed that grows anywhere. It is an erect annual herb with flowers that look like white buttons. Its leaves and roots are used to make tea, which is commonly used by village folks as treatment for dengue and malaria.

How did the old folks discover the medicinal value of this plant? The story goes that sick dogs would nibble on the plant and get well.

Dengue is common during the rainy season. Our children Ted and Tricia got it in early year 2000. At that time there was no vaccine yet. As liquids are good for any fever, I gave them *botones-botonesan* tea. Their platelet went up and they got well. After two years, Ted had dengue again. His blood test showed he had dengue before. I gave him *botones-botonesan* tea and monitored his platelet count, and he got well again. We have many known cases of friends who took *botones-botonesan* tea who got well from dengue.

Please note this is our own experience. Every case is different so it is best to seek medical advice on every situation.

## Propagation and care

*Botones-botonesan* is a weed that grows anywhere on any soil but it prefers sunny areas. It grows runners from its rhizomes or rootstock.

# Damong Maria

*Chinese Honeysuckle; Artemisia vulgaris*

*Damong maria* as its name implies, is a grass.

I usually prune plants in Flor's Garden. One time, I accidentally cut my finger and it bled profusely. I got *damong maria* leaves, washed them and squeezed their juice to apply to the cut. I was amazed—the bleeding stopped immediately and the cut instantly closed.

Just recently, my husband Ed had a small cut while shoving. It has been a week and it still has not healed. Then he remembered *damong maria*. He applied its juice to the cut. The result? He was happy, the cut closed and healed very fast!

*Damong maria* is said to have anti-fungal, anti-bacterial, anti-parasitic, and anti-inflammatory properties. Juice of leaves is used for cuts and wounds. Pounded leaves are also used against headaches and skin diseases.

Truly the *damong maria* is a must in every garden! Our “Band Aid Plant.” And it is a beautiful ground cover, too.

## Propagation and Care

*Damong maria* grows well in any soil. Water regularly and grow it under direct sunlight. Propagate it with stem cuttings.





Photo courtesy of Evelyn Taghap of Carolina Bamboo Garden in Antipolo.

# Kolitis

*Amaranth, Chinese Spinach; Amaranthus viridis*

*Kolitis* is a succulent evergreen weed that grows erect and tall. It is a delicious and nutritious leafy plant that is eaten as a vegetable. It is rich in calcium, iron, and Vitamins B and C. It helps boost the immune system. It can also be prepared and served as tea.

Cherie Atillano, UN Nutrition Ambassador, says that, like most *Ilonggos*, she loves *kolitis* leaves and cooks it with *monggo*. Or just blanche *kolitis* leaves. But, first, remove the thorns and add *bagoong*. So good!

## Propagation and care

Matured seeds from the *kolitis* weed germinate easily. They grow in all types of soil but they prefer rich sandy loam as medium. They grow well under direct sun.

In the Crabmeat *Borbotak* recipe on page 23, you may use *Kolitis* leaves instead of *Borbotak*.





Photo courtesy of Sonya Garcia  
of Sonya's Garden in Tagaytay.

# Lupo Lupo

*Spenochlea zeylanica*

*Lupo lupu* is a weed commonly found in ricefields and many other areas in the countryside. It is known as a local indigenous vegetable or a cooking weed.

Sonya Garcia, owner of Sonya's Garden in Tagaytay, gave me *lupo lupu*. She promotes its propagation. She said it is nutritious and contains fiber to clean the digestive system. It also helps fight and stop cancer, especially that of the colon.

Sonya suggests to just drop the leaves in boiling water with ginger bits. It is delicious on its own, or just add to it other green leafy vegetables like *alugbati*, and *kamote* tops. Leaves are also prepared as soup with fish and other sea food.

## Propagation and care

*Lupo lupu* is propagated with cuttings. It can grow in any soil under direct sun.



# Makahiya

*Bashful Mimosa / Sensitive Plant; Mimosa pudica*

Have you seen a plant react to your touch? Touch the *makahiya* leaves—the leaves will close and reopen a few minutes later. This is always a big hit to kids who visit Flors' Garden. *Makahiya* is a common creeping weed that grows anywhere. It has attractive pink flowers that look like mini powder puffs. Some plant nurseries abroad sell *makahiya* plant placed in a beautiful pot.

*Makahiya* has anti-inflammatory property. Its leaves and roots are pounded and applied externally to an inflamed area to reduce swelling. An old wife's tale says that placing makahiya underneath a child's pillow at night reduces hyperactivity.

## Propagation and care

*Makahiya* reproduces through seeds in pods, or through rooted stem runners. It grows in any soil condition under direct sunlight.





# Pansit-Pansitan

*Peperomia*; *Peperomia pellucida* Linn

*Pansit-pansitan* is a common herb with shiny heart-shaped leaves. Its stems are light green in color and are almost translucent. It has tiny dot-like flowers.

The entire plant is edible—it is eaten raw and added to salad. Thoroughly wash it, cut about an inch in size. Mix it with diced onion, tomato, salt, and pepper. Pickled mango is optional.

It is widely used as folkloric herbal medicine for gout, kidney disorders, and rheumatic pain.

In general, caution must be observed in using herbs from public places and in moderation. *Pansit-pansitan* may be boiled as tea. But do not drink it for prolonged period. And consult a doctor.

## Propagation and Care

*Pansit-pansitan* is propagated through its tiny seeds that drop off on the ground and grow easily. They can grow in any damp and moist area, even on thatched roofing and moist adobe stones.





# Pipinong Ligaw

*Wild Pipino, Creeping Cucumber;*  
*Melothria pendula* Linn.

*Pipinong ligaw* is a climbing vine with tiny melon-shaped fruits that start as green and turn almost black when ripe.

Do you like crunchy cucumbers in your salad? Most of our guests exclaim—“Oh we didn’t know that’s edible. We remove that from the garden.”

*Pipinong ligaw* fruits taste like cucumber but are tinier and crunchier. The tiny green fruits of the wild *pipino* add color and are good conversation pieces in salads and any food presentation. The cucumbers remain crunchy for a week, especially when placed in the refrigerator.

The wild *pipino* is a very invasive climber so it is best to plant it where you want it to be.

## Propagation and care

*Pipinong ligaw* can grow anywhere on any soil, and under partial shade or direct sun. The plant propagates easily through ripe black seeds.

# Sampa-Sampalukan

*Seed-under-leaf; Phyllanthus niruri*

*Sampa-sampalukan* or “seed-under-leaf” is a common roadside and garden weed, which looks like a miniature tamarind or *sampalok* tree. It has seed pods that grow beneath the leaves and bloom into small green flowers.

The decoction of an entire *sampa-sampalukan* plant, including the leaves, stems, from this plant and flowers, is good for conditions related to the digestive system. Tea is used as tonic for the stomach. My neighbor Lily Cheng takes *sampa-sampalukan* tea as an aid against LBM.

According to Dr. Jaime Galvez Tan, there are many cases of Filipinos that can't leave as OFWs because Hepatitis Antigen / Antibody reaction are seen in their medical results. For such cases, he recommends washing the entire *sampa-sampalukan* plant, making it into tea and drinking it three times a day for three months. After doing so, he said, that an OFW sees Hepa marks disappear. With such advice, Dr. Jaime Galvez Tan has helped many leave as OFWs abroad.

## Propagation and care

It is propagated with seed, which can grow in any soil and under direct sun.







# Takipkuhol

*Gotu Kola, Indian Hydrocotyle; Centella asiatica*

*Takipkuhol* is known as the “herb of longevity” and a “memory enhancer” plant. Dr. Jaime Galvez Tan says: “The World Health Organization (WHO) has classified *Takipkuhol* as protective for the brain and the nervous system. It is now one of the most sought after tropical medicinal plants in the world as a memory enhancer.”

*Takipkuhol* is used as a culinary vegetable and as medicinal herb. Its stems and leaves are used for food because of their high vitamin and mineral contents.

The fresh leaves are eaten fresh in salad. Leaves are also added in hot water as tea. Liquid from boiled parts of the plant is used as a diuretic, tonic, and as a stimulant.

Every time we introduce the *takipkuhol* plants to visitors as memory enhancers—the immediate response is “Oh, I need that because *makakalimutin na ako.*” Once, a visitor shared that she adds *takipkuhol* leaves in sandwiches. One of our guests claimed that five pieces of *takipkuhol* leaves are almost equivalent to biogestic against headache.

Dr. Jaime Galvez Tan also uses *takipkuhol* as face moisturizer by pounding the leaves, adding Virgin Coconut Oil (VCO) to it, and applying it to his face for a few minutes. Try it!

## Propagation and care

*Takipkuhol* may be propagated by digging out the runners from its base. They can grow in any soil under direct sunlight.

## Takipkuhol Tempura

*Maur Lichauco*

### **Mix together**

- 1 cup cornstarch
- ½ cup flour
- 1 teaspoon garlic paste
- 1 tablespoon rock salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper or
- 1 *siling labuyo* finely chopped

### **Add about**

- 2 to 2½ cups coconut milk to make a light batter with the consistency of evaporated milk
- Heat oil for deep frying.
- Dip the *takipkuhol* leaves into the batter and dry until crisp.
- Drain well on paper towel.

### **Dip: Mix together**

- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped sweet pickle or pickle relish
- 1 tablespoon sweet pickle juice
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped garlic
- 2 teaspoons salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper



# Talinum

*Jewels of Opar; Talinum paniculatum (jacq.) Gaertn.*

*Talinum* was the inspiration of our book *Ooops... Don't Throw Those Weeds Away!* as it is edible and very easy to grow.

Known as “Japanese Ginseng,” *Talinum* is rich in Vitamin C. It is a succulent herb with sour stem and leaves. Its flowers are small and pink colored. It is used as a vegetable with sour taste that is especially good in fish dishes (*sinigang*) and *monggo* dishes. In cooking *sinigang*, add talinum leaves when the *sinigang* is already cooked. Then serve it immediately.

In Flor's Garden, freshly picked *talinum* leaves are used in making salad. Leaves are also good to make vegetable noodle soup. They can be used to make “*tortang talinum*” with tomato, onion, salt, pepper, and eggs. For sandwiches, *talinum* may serve as a substitute for lettuce. They can be blended and made into juice.

Here is the recipe of *talinum* juice by Maur Lichauco on the side column.

## Propagation and Care

*Talinum* is among the easiest plants to propagate. Ripened seeds that fall to the ground germinate easily. Stem cuttings can grow just as fast and do not require special soil conditions. They grow well under direct sun.

*I once spoke at a graduate school. There was a contest and I gave Talinum as a prize. Everyone wanted to have a plant. Within two weeks the winner was able to give some propagated plants. That's how easy it is to propagate. Truly, No Filipino Should Be Hungry!*



Talinum root like ginseng.



## Talinum Drink

*Maur Lichauco*

There is no definite measurement for this drink as it depends on the availability of the talinum.

### Procedure

1. Pound talinum leaves.
2. Add enough water to cover (about 2 inches high).
3. Boil once, then simmer for 15 minutes.
4. Steep for 20 minutes.
5. Strain and cool.

### To serve

- Add *calamansi* or *dalandan* juice to cold *talinum* tea to enhance flavor.
- Add syrup\* to taste.

### \*Syrup

1 cup water

1 cup sugar

1 teaspoon *calamansi* oil

Boil together until slightly thick.

Cool.



# Tanglad

*Lemongrass; Andropogon atratus*

*Tanglad* is an edible grass known for its fragrant lemony scent. It looks like, but it is different from, Citronella Grass, which is used against mosquito and is not edible.

*Tanglad* contains vitamin A and has antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and antimicrobial properties. It is traditionally used in cooking, particularly, lechon and roasted chicken. It makes an excellent tea drink that helps remove stomach queasiness and bloatedness.

*Tanglad* or lemongrass is good to have in the garden. When you have guests, just get a few lemongrass leaves and serve as tea. You can also combine with *pandan* leaves.

In Flor's Garden, tanglad tea is one of the official natural teas served to guests. Here's the recipe of *Lemongrass* tea by Maur Lichauco, who says "Flor Tarriela serves this tea at her home. It is a most refreshing tea and I like it better than *salabat* or any other herbal tea. It is good to serve at the table. Sip it in between dishes to clean the taste buds."

## Propagation and care

*Tanglad* is propagated with division of clumps. It grows in any soil. But it prefers loose soil under direct sunlight.

## Tanglad (Lemongrass) Tea

*Maur Lichauco*

### **Mix together**

8 lemongrass stalks with leaves, finely chopped

5 *pandan* leaves, finely chopped

6 cups water

### **Procedure**

1. Let lemongrass, *pandan*, and water boil once in a casserole.
2. Simmer for 10-15 minutes then cover.
3. Turn off the heat and steep for 25 minutes.
4. Strain through cheesecloth.
5. Serve hot.



# Tawa Tawa

*Snake Weed; Euphorbia hirta*

*Tawa tawa*, also locally called “*gatas-gatas*” for its milky juice, is an indigenous plant considered as a popular treatment for dengue in the Philippines. The whole plant (leaves and roots) are usually boiled until soft. Strain the water. Let it cool, then drink it as tea.

Chit Juan, founder of ECHOstore tells this story:

“Worth a Laugh”

How many times have you come across the term “*tawa tawa*?” A doctor’s son who is eight years old got mild dengue. The mother, who is also a doctor, a part-time botanist and integrative medicine believer, picked some herbs from her garden and made a tea—which the son took as iced tea. In a day or two, his rashes disappeared! She is a doctor who believes that there is wisdom in herbal medicines and cures, using recipes our ancestors proved to be helpful.

I can only smile when they argue about the wonders of *tawa tawa*. The hundreds of users will attest to its efficacy. If we cannot send the herbs to everyone to plant, the next best thing is the tincture, which another doctor concocted.

To some, *tawa tawa* may be worth a laugh because they are still non-believers. But to those whose lives it has helped get back to normal, *tawa tawa* is worth more than a laugh.

## Propagation and care

*Tawa tawa* grows and sprouts anywhere. Propagate it with seeds. It may be planted on the ground or in pots. It needs full sun.

## II. Edible Flowers

*“Where flowers bloom, so does hope.”*

*“God is in all creatures, even in the smallest flowers.”*  
Martin Luther

It is fulfilling to grow flowers in the garden. How much more if they are edible!

Here are some edible flowers to grow that can add color and beauty, not only to a garden but also to food servings.

Blue Ternate

Cosmos

Cadena de Amor

Katuray







# Blue Ternate or Samsamping

*Butterfly-pea; Clitoria ternatea*

Care for blue rice? Blue tea drink?

Blue ternate is a climbing or vine species that grows anywhere. It has dark blue flowers with either single or double petals. It flowers all year-round. It also bears pods, which are edible.

Blue ternate fresh flowers are also edible. They are added to salad or rice to make blue rice, and also to hot water to make tea. *Calamansi*, when added with blue ternate flowers, becomes light pink or “purple *calamansi* juice,” depending on the quantity of the flowers.

Blue ternate is said to have antioxidants properties. It is beneficial to maintain strong and healthy eyes. It is known to combat the effects of diabetes, lower blood cholesterol, and is good for the heart. It is also used against stress, anxiety, and depression. Some say it is also anti-aging.

Good friend Jenny Pantoja drinks blue ternate tea regularly. By doing so, she experiences a calming effect and lowering of her blood pressure. Menardo and Kay Jimenez also regularly take blue ternate tea to control their hypertension.

## Propagation and Care

Blue ternate plants grow in nearly any type of soil. Good drainage is critical. Put in direct sun. Propagation is commonly done with seeds. But some say they are also successful in propagating it with cuttings.



## Blue Ternate Tea

### Ingredients

- 1 cup hot water
- 2-3 pieces fresh blue ternate

### Procedure

1. Put hot water in a cup.
2. Add fresh blue ternate flowers.
3. Let it stay for 1 minute or may stir.
4. Tea ready to drink!
5. Add honey or sugar to taste (optional).



## Blue Rice

### Ingredients

- 1 kilo rice
- 10-15 pieces of fresh or dried blue ternate flowers
- Note: Amount of blue ternate depends on how blue you want the rice

### Procedure

1. Wash the rice.
2. Put the fresh or dried blue ternate flowers in a glass.
3. Add 2-3 tablespoons of hot water in the glass and stir until the water turns blue.
4. Add the blue water to rice, then cook it with enough water.
5. Serve the hot blue rice!

**Note:** Rice washing is good for plants.

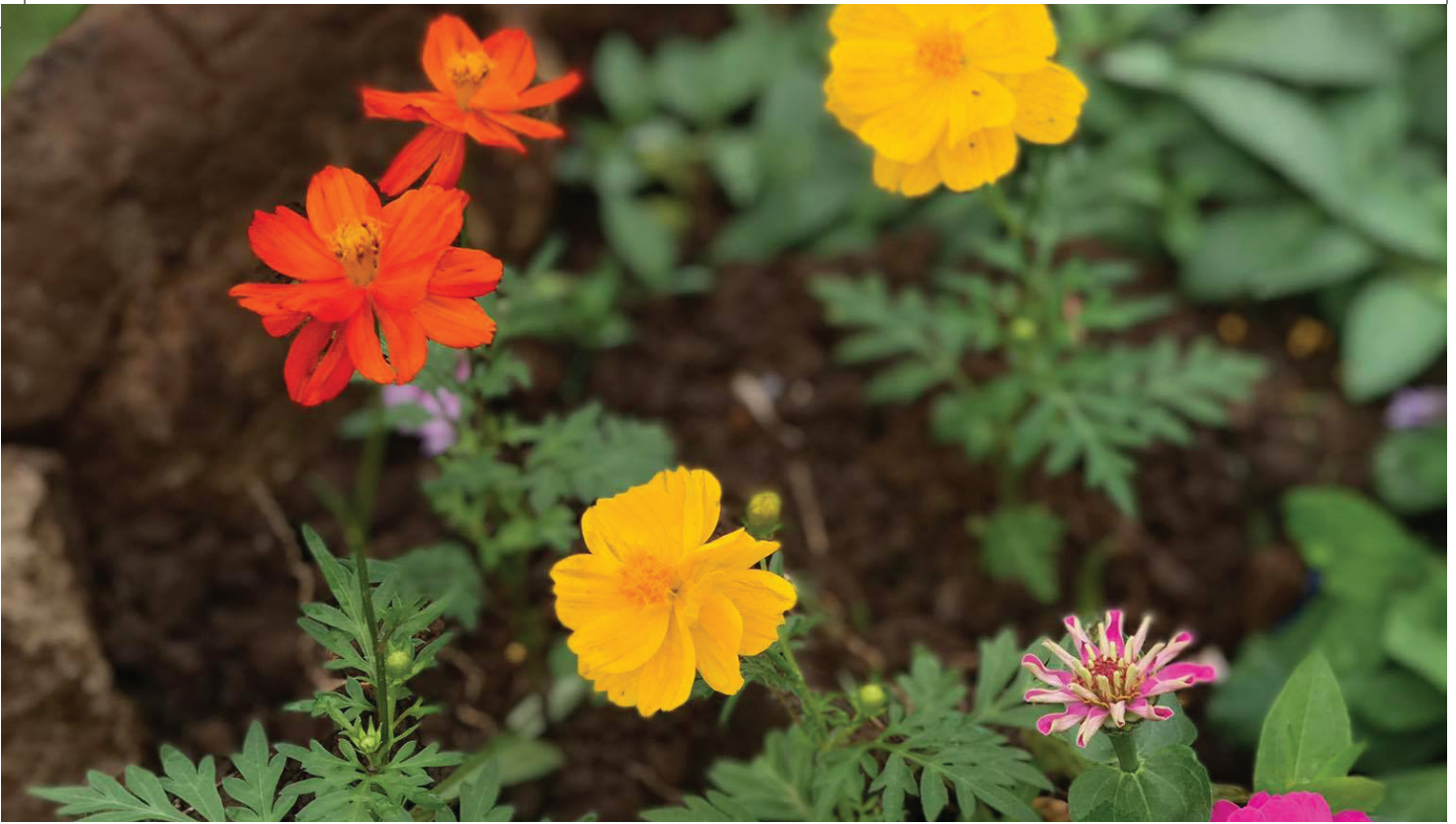


Photo courtesy of Michael Caballes of Bukid Amara in Lucban Quezon.

## Cosmos

*Cosmos*; *Cosmos sulphureus*, *Cosmos bipinnatus*,

Cosmos is an ornamental plant with colorful flowers that attract bees, butterflies, and other beneficial insects. Cosmos flowers add beauty to life with its vibrant colors. Flor's Garden uses yellow and orange cosmos flowers as colorful toppings in salad and as decoration to any dish.

Michael Caballes of *Bukid Amara* grows different cosmos colors, such as, pink, white, and purple.

### Propagation and care

Cosmos is easy to grow on a well-draining soil and under direct sun. It is propagated with seeds. Seeds usually fall to the ground and germinate.



# Cadena de Amor

*Mexican Creeper; Antigonon leptopus*

*Cadena de amor* is a common climbing vine with dark green, heart-shaped leaves, and pink or white flowers that grow in bunches. It creeps on fences and gates, trees, and even on shrubs and bushes. It is also known as the “Queen’s Wreath” because of its abundant and lovely dainty flowers that can be made into wreaths.

Aside from using *cadena de amor* as ornamental displays for its beautiful branches with flowers, Flor’s Garden serves its pink and white flowers in salads and other dishes to add color and beauty. Others add the flowers to cupcakes. Noni Dolera says that flowers and leaves can be dipped in batter and deep fried as tempura, too.



## Propagation and Care

*Cadena de amor* can grow anywhere. It loves direct sun. Propagation is with seeds and stem cuttings of the vines.







# Katuray

*Vegetable Hummingbird; Sesbania grandiflora*

*Katuray* is a fast-growing flowering tree with large pea-like flowers and seed pods. Its flower comes in various shades of yellow, white, rose pink, or red.

Flowers are edible. They are eaten either cooked or raw in salads, curries, and as a steamed vegetable. The leaves and young pods are blanched and eaten with *bagoong* or fermented salt fish.

In Flor's Garden, we add fresh red *katuray* flowers to our salads. Former PEZA Chair Lilia de Lima loves the *katuray* flowers with salad dressing. It is Cora Claudio's favorite, too, with vinaigrette dressing.

## Propagation and Care

Branch cuttings of the *katuray* tree can be planted directly into the ground. It can also grow in any type of soil under direct sun. *Katuray* can also be propagated with seed germination.



# Blushing Blooms Salad

*Maur Lichauco*

Margarita Locsin Chan gave the name for this salad.

To prepare the paco and *pansit-pansitan* for salad, choose and pluck only the tips and the very soft parts of the fern (*paco*) and weed (*pansit-pansitan*) depending on the quality to be prepared. Wash well and gently pat dry.

## Prepare

- *Pansit-pansitan* tips
- *Paco* tips
- *Singkamas*, finely stripped
- Red tomatoes, blanched, peeled, seeded, and cubed
- Wild *pipino* fruits (optional or if available)
- Hard boiled egg, sliced

Arrange on individual salad plates and decorate with edible flowers like Wine Red *Katuray*, Blue Ternate, and *Cadena de Amor*.

In Flor's Garden, we add talinum, *gynura*, and *takipkuhol* leaves, too.

## Dressing

- 1/3 cup minced onions
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped garlic
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon white pepper
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 3 tablespoons cane vinegar
- 2 tablespoons *calamansi* juice
- 4 tablespoons finely chopped sweet pickles
- 1 cup mayonnaise

Season to taste.

Pour on dressing just before serving the salad.



### III.

## Other Common Edible and Medicinal Plants

No Filipino Should Be Hungry! And all must be Healthy!

If you'll start a garden, for food and a medicinal chest, we suggest easy-to-grow plants to harvest regularly, strengthen the immune system, and prevent sickness.

Here are some common edible plants to have in your garden based on our experience as to their usefulness, benefits, and ease of growing. We included plants that can be harvested regularly, plants for tea, which provide calming effect, plants against common cough and colds, plants for bruises and sore areas.

We also included Dr. Jaime Galvez Tan's effective simple green leafy vegetables, such as, Kamote, Kangkong, Malunggay, Saluyot, and Sili (KKMSS) salad that not only nourish the body but can prevent and even reverse dialysis, as Dr. Tan has seen.

They are by no means complete and there are many more of them in the Philippines. We chose plants that can be grown in containers if you do not have a big space.

Happy gardening!

### A. Easy-To-Grow Plants with Health Benefits

Alugbati  
Curry leaf tree  
Gynura  
Kadok  
Kamote  
Kangkong  
Malunggay  
Paco  
Papaya  
Saluyot  
Sili  
KKMSS Salad  
KKMSS Smoothie

How to Wash Vegetables, Fruits and Leaves



### B. Plants That are Good for Tea and Juice and Natural Breath Freshener

#### Tea

Guyabano  
Luyang Dilaw  
Pandan  
Tarragon  
Tsaang Gubat

#### Juice

Balimbing  
Calamansi

#### Natural Breath Freshener

Stevia  
Yerba Buena

### C. Plants for Colds and Cough

Lagundi  
Luya  
Oregano  
Sambong

### D. Plants for Bruises and Sore Joints

Ikmo  
Katakataka  
Mayana

### E. Common Anti-Fungal or Cleaning Plants

Akapulko  
Kamantigi





# A.

## Easy-To-Grow Plants with Health Benefits

Alugbati

Curry leaf tree

Gynura

Kadok

Kamote

Kangkong

Malunggay

Paco

Papaya

Saluyot

Sili

KKMSS Salad

KKMSS Smoothie

How to Wash Vegetables, Fruits and Leaves

Since my husband Ed loves fresh vegetables, I planted alugbati, kamote, kangkong, sili, malunggay, paco, papaya, etc. in our home garden during the 2020 lockdown, I found picking and harvesting fresh vegetables very fulfilling. The fresh vegetables kept us healthy and saved us some money, too. Try them!



# Alugbati

*Malabar spinach; Basella alba*

*Alugbati* is a popular vegetable, also known as “Malabar spinach.” It has purple or green stems and heart shaped leaves. It is nutritious, rich in Vitamins A, C, calcium, iron, and antioxidants. It helps improve the immune system, eye health, good skin, and digestion. It is good as fresh in salad, or added to any dish, such as, *monggo*, *sinigang* or just sautéd.

Arsenio “Toto” Barcelona, President of Harbest Agribusiness Corporation and Co-founder of Agri Go Negosyo with Presidential Adviser Joey Concepcion and Ginggay Hontiveros, remember cooking *alugbati* with the Sacadas, (migrant sugar cane harvesters) in Negros. A power-packed lunch of *monggo* soup with *alugbati*, thin slices of pork, and lots of rice tasted great and is an energy food.

Toto shares this simple recipe: Harvest the vegetative growth at around five to six inches. Wash the leaves. Heat a frying pan with oil and stir fry garlic cloves till brown. Add *alugbati* leaves with a sprinkle of salt. Cover the pan. In two to three minutes, you have a delicious meal, a viand recommended for children and pregnant mothers.

## Propagation and care

*Alugbati* grows by stem cuttings or by seed. It grows well in any soil but it prefers sandy loam and full sunlight.

# Curry Leaf Tree

*Curry leaf; Murraya koenigi*

Curry leaf tree is an aromatic tropical tree with strong scent.

Its fresh and dried leaves are used in cooking soups, stews, and meat dishes. Acclaimed chef and food author Peter Kurovita uses curry leaf a lot in his cooking series.

On a visit to Sri Lanka, I noticed that curry leaf tree grows in many homes and most cuisines have added curry leaves due to their health benefits. Josephine Gamboa also advised that crushed curry leaves added to Virgin Coconut Oil (VCO) then massaged to scalp promote hair growth.

So the curry leaf has culinary value as well as hair-growth value. Sally Sabalbuero adds that she uses the leaves as insecticide due to their smell. Thus, she calls the curry leaf tree a “malathion tree.”

Sally’s Formula for Spraying:

- Collect curry leaves or cut off top growing branches.
- Put in a container.
- Pour water to the chopped leaves and soak them overnight.
- Strain the liquid and use it to spray on infested foliage.

Remaining solids of chopped leaves or branches can be added as mulch on top of plants. Add them to stagnant water in the garden to kill mosquito larvae.

## Propagation and care

Propagate curry leaf tree with seeds. It can grow in any type of soil and is best placed under full sunlight.







Photo courtesy of Josephine Gamboa.

## Gynura

*Longevity Spinach; Gynura procumbens*

*Gynura* is a low-growing perennial, semi-succulent plant. It is edible and with medicinal value.

The young leaves of *gynura* are tender and eaten fresh as is or added to salads, smoothies and soup. They may be used as juice or tea or stir fried with other vegetables or sautéed alone. *Gynura* leaves help in lowering cholesterol and blood pressure.

### Propagation and care

*Gynura* is easy to grow. It is propagated by stem cuttings. It grows best in moist soil, under partial shade.

# Kadok

Wild Pepper; *Piper sarmentosum*

*Kadok* is an edible herb, with heart-shaped leaves like “*ikmo*” but with green stem and waxy leaves.

Columnist Domini Torevillas gave us our first *kadok* plant in Flor’s Garden. It grew abundantly. It is not only edible, it is medicinal too with its antioxidant properties.

The leaves may be eaten raw. In Flor’s Garden, we serve salad using *kadok* leaves as wrapper instead of lettuce. We serve *kadok* omelette (young leaves sliced in fine size and mixed with scrambled egg) for breakfast. *Kadok* is also served as crispy tempura. Here’s the recipe.

## Propagation and care

Propagate *kadok* with division of transplant runners with roots. It is easy to grow in any soil. In summer, make sure to water it well. We add coir dust (coconut husk by product) to the soil to retain moisture.



## Crispy Kadok Tempura

### Ingredients

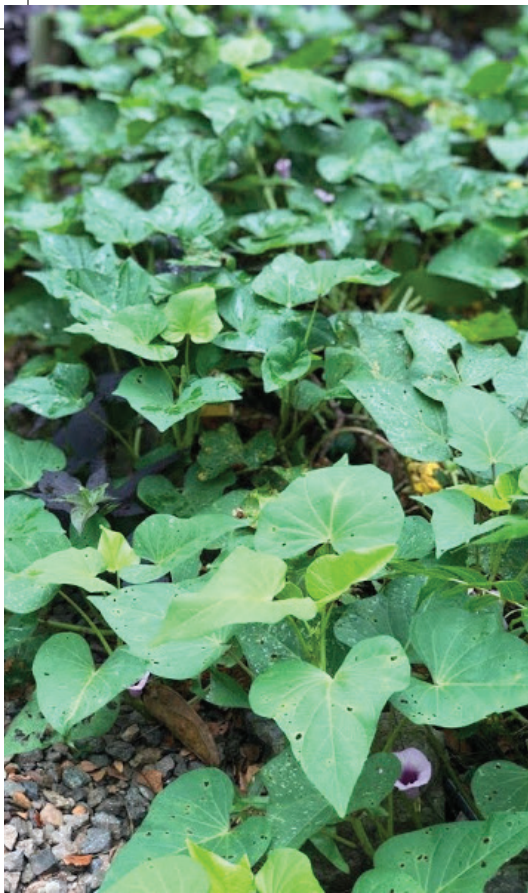
- Young *kadok* leaves
- 1 cup all purpose flour (or cornstarch)
- 1 cup cold water and ice
- Cooking oil
- Sauce

### Procedure

1. Pick up the young leaves of *kadok*.
2. Combine the cornstarch, cold water, and ice. Use a chopstick to mix.
3. Dip the leaves into the mixture then fry them in hot oil.
4. Serve with vinegar and a pinch of salt.

**Note:** The secret of the tempura crispiness is the ice, the batter, and the oil (need to be very hot).





*Kamote Green*



*Kamote Yellow*

# Kamote

*Sweet Potato; Ipomoea batatas*

*Kamote* is nutritious and a rich source of vitamins A, B, C, calcium, iron, and phosphorus. The leaves are excellent source of antioxidants and fiber. The leaves and roots are edible.

We often welcome our visitors with freshly picked sweet potato (*kamote*) and home-made dip made of coconut milk and honey. *Kamote* is versatile—good for salad, main dishes, and desserts.

We have different types of sweet potato (*kamote*) with yellow, green, or purple leaves. Evelyn Bautista “Mamabel” of Bacolod gave our first sweet orange *kamote* plant.

## Propagation and care

Kamote is propagated mainly with stem cuttings. The kamote root may also be germinated for planting. For root crops, prepare loose soil for roots to grow well. Good to dig and add twigs, even dried branches, to where kamote will be planted.

My husband Ed’s favorite salad is a very simple *kamote* salad prepared by Nora Camingao.

Here’s a candied *kamote* recipe by Maur Lichauco:

## Kamote Tops Salad

*Nora Camingao*

### Ingredients

- 1 plate *kamote* top leaves
- 5 cups water
- 1 piece water
- 1 piece onion
- 1 piece tomato
- Salt
- Dressing: 3 tablespoons vinegar
- 1½ tablespoons sweetener (*muscovado* or *stevia*)
- Optional: Salted eggs and edible flowers

### Procedure

1. Boil water with a little salt.
2. Put the *kamote* top leaves.
3. Strain the *kamote* leaves.
4. Sauce: Mix the vinegar and sweetener and boil. When boiled, pour in *kamote* top leaves.
5. Add sliced onion and tomato.
6. Serve the *kamote* top salad.



*Kamote Purple*

## Candied Kamote

*Maur Lichauco*

### Ingredients

- 1 kilo yellow *kamote* (peel and quarter)
- ¾ cup pineapple juice
- 4 cups washed sugar (Separate 2 tablespoons sugar)

### Procedure

1. Boil the ingredients together.
2. Add the *kamote* and boil for 10 minutes more or until the *kamote* is slightly bruised.
3. Drain the *kamote* from the syrup then transfer to a baking pan.
4. Continue to cook the syrup until it is slightly thick.
5. Add to the syrup ½ cup butter.
6. Blend well and boil once.
7. Pour the syrup mixture over the *kamote*.
8. Add ¼ cup butter, cut into cubes.
9. Sprinkle with 2 tablespoons of sugar.
10. Bake at 350° F for 30 minutes or until the *kamote* is done.



*Kamote Orange*





# Kangkong

*Water Spinach; Ipomoea aquatica*

*Kangkong* is a “humble” leafy vegetable desired for its crunchy hollow stems and tender leaves.

An aquatic plant that is low in calories, *kangkong* is a good source of vitamins C and K, iron, calcium, and antioxidants.

It is commonly stir fried or cooked as “adobo,” which is popular. It is also added to dishes like “sinigang” to make a complete meal. It can also be coated in batter and fried to make a crispy appetizer.

It grows easily and is readily available throughout the year.

## Propagation and care

Propagate *kangkong* with cuttings of the stem shoots or with seeds. It loves water and direct sun.



# Malunggay

*Horseradish tree; Moringa oleifera*

Dr. Jaime Galvez Tan says *malunggay* is the “best vegetable in the whole world.” Others refer to it as a “miracle plant,” with parts that can be used in several ways.

“Malunggay Queen” Founder Bernie Arellano of Moringaling Philippine Foundation (MPFI) says that *malunggay* nourishes the body with its powerful calcium, iron, vitamins, amino acids, omega oils, and antioxidants. As a condiment to dishes of chicken or mung beans, *malunggay* leaves are added after cooking and turning off the fire immediately. Matured pods with its white parts are included in dishes like *pinakbet* or *dinengdeng*. *Malunggay* flowers are also eaten raw in salads.

Tessie Marcos, a radio host in Kamusta Kabayan in Guam, use *malunggay* leaves for tea, *tinola*, omelette and spaghetti sauce.

Fresh *malunggay* leaves are added to soups, such as, clams with ginger to help increase milk in nursing mothers. Daughter Tricia knew this so when she moved to Guam, she brought *malunggay* capsules with her. *Malunggay* pills and drinks are now readily available in many drugstores and supermarkets.

## Propagation and care

*Malunggay* is propagated with cuttings of branch planted directly on ground or in a pot or from seed germination. It grows in any well-drained soil and under direct sun. Bernie says *malunggay* cuttings have an “attitude” problem when newly propagated—they don’t want to be touched or moved until they are fully established.





# Paco

*Edible fern / Vegetable Fern; Diplazium esculentum*

*Paco* is a common edible fern that grows well in Laguna and Quezon.

The young fronds or leaves of *paco* are added to salad. They are especially good with white cheese and vinegar-and-honey dressing. They are cooked in many ways, sautéed, and with coconut milk.

Josephine Costales of Costales Nature Farm in Majayjay Laguna says *Paco* is popular in their area for salad, omelette, and dishes with coconut milk and *kuhol* and fishes like a mud fish, and *tilapia*.

Baby and Toto Malvar of Mount Purro Nature Reserve (MPNR) in Antipolo prepare delicious *paco* salad.

## Propagation and care

*Paco* is propagated with division of its runners or rhizomes. It can grow in any soil condition but it prefers moist soil and under partial shade.

## Paco Salad

*At Mount Purro Nature Reserve*

### Ingredients

- *Paco* leaves
- Onions
- Turnip (Singkamas)
- Red eggs
- Tomatoes
- Dressing: Vinegar, sugar, salt, pepper, sweet chili sauce

### Procedure

1. Wash *paco* very well.
2. Prepare the tomatoes (seeded and cubed).
3. Add onions, turnips (*Singkamas*), and red eggs.
4. Arrange in platter.

**Note:** When available, white cheese is a good addition.



# Papaya

*Papaya; Carica papaya*

Papaya is a small tree with no branches. Papaya leaves are effectively its branches. Ripe papaya is a popular breakfast fruit with squeezed calamansi or added to salads. Young or green papaya is cooked as vegetable. It contains papaine, which is considered as a meat tenderizer. It is excellent too for pickling or “*atsara*,” added pepper and carrots.

Papaya is a delicious fruit. It is also loaded with nutrients, rich in fiber, vitamin C, and antioxidants.

Some Filipinos believe that juice of fresh papaya leaves is a natural cure for dengue fever. Pounding and squeezing juice from papaya leaves give about one (1) teaspoon per leaf. Pounded juice is quite better. You can use papaya fresh left over. Rub inner left over on your face, massage for 5-10 minutes. Leave as long as possible. Another option is mix with salt, which act as exfoliant.

Toto Barcelona said there are many varieties of papaya. Red Lady papaya is a popular variety. Many have gained a stable livelihood growing and marketing Red Lady, such as, Mr. Ed Cañuto of Badiangan, Iloilo. Mr. Ed started with a few seedlings of Red Lady and now has 2,500 trees from which he harvests Red Lady papaya fruits to supply supermarkets.

## Propagation and care

Papaya is propagated with seeds. Toto says always get quality seeds. Papaya has male and female seeds. It is important to choose the female seeds to grow papaya to bear fruits. These are the seeds from the lower part of the papaya fruit. Soak the seeds in water to eliminate floating seeds, which are not good for germination. Papaya likes well-drained soil under direct sun.



Papaya female seeds at the lower part of the papaya fruit.





Photo courtesy of Edna Sanchez of EV Sanchez Agri Farm in Jala Jala, Rizal.

# Saluyot

*Jew's Mallow; Corchorus olitorius L.*

*Saluyot* is an edible leafy vegetable that is valued as a nutritious food. It is rich in protein, iron, calcium, beta-carotene, and vitamin C. Many Filipinos regard *saluyot* as a vegetable that is good for clear eyesight; having healthy red blood cells, strong bones and teeth; smooth and clear skin, strong immune cells, and fast wound-healing. It is also known to be an anti-stress food.

*Saluyot* may be eaten raw or cooked, and mixed in vegetable dishes.

## Propagation and care

It is easy to grow in any soil and under direct sunlight. It is propagated with seeds.



# Sili (Labuyo)

*Wild Chili; Capsicum frutescens*

*Siling labuyo* is a small hot chili pepper that is sometimes called as “Filipino bird’s eye.” Its leaves and berries are used in traditional Philippine cuisine. It is added to stews, soups, salads, and other dishes for spicy hot flavor.

Ponchit Ponce Enrile, President of The Philippine Chili Federation says that *siling labuyo* is a good source of Vitamins A, C, B6, K1, potassium and copper. But it usually consumed in small amounts so it does not contribute much to daily micronutrient needs. However, he says that it provides “happy hormone” and chili-infused oil is an effective treatment for localized pain.

Dr. Jaime Galvez Tan suggests three green *siling labuyo* fruits three times a day after meals daily to swallow like a pill, with a glass of water so you do not taste the hot flavor. He says that it is anti-inflammatory, and anti-tumor, and is a fat burner. My sister Kay, who religiously takes *siling labuyo*, is fit and certainly looks much younger than her age!

## Propagation and Care

*Siling labuyo* is propagated by seeds. It grows best in sunny spot and well-draining soil. What is nice is, sometimes, birds just drop *siling labuyo* seeds in your garden.







## KKMSS Salad

*Kamote, kangkong, malunggay, saluyot* or *sili* is nutritious individually on its own. How much more if they are taken together as KKMSS? And even more, if you add optional ginger, turmeric, tomato, onion, and nuts?

According to Dr. Jaime Galvez Tan, KKMSS serves as an excellent prevention against many diseases. Even more remarkable, he has seen patients undergoing dialysis freed from this costly procedure by taking KKMSS often! Why not try KKMSS to avoid having kidney problems? Dr. Jaime Galvez Tan also said that dark green leafy shoots of Filipino vegetables, consumed daily, have been shown to prevent blood clots to avoid a heart attack or a stroke. Let's eat this "food medicine" and be healthy!

Here's Dr. Jaime Galvez Tan's KKMSS Salad on the side column.

## KKMSS Salad

*Kamote, Kangkong, Malunggay, Saluyot, and Sili Leaves*)

### Ingredients

- Fresh leaves of *kamote, kangkong, malunggay, saluyot, and sili*
- Dressing
  - Your preferred sweetener: *muscovado* or honey
  - Vinegar
  - *Calamansi* juice
- Optional: Additional garnishment
  - Peanut (Chopped)
  - Tomatoes
  - Onions
  - Garlic
  - Ginger/Turmeric

### Procedure

1. *Kamote, Kangkong, Malunggay, Saluyot, and Sili* leaves - Wash and dry them. Chop the leaves. Then put them in a bowl.
2. Add the leaves with vinegar and sweetener, and *calamansi* juice.
3. Optional: Mix with finely chopped fresh tomatoes, onions, garlic, ginger, and turmeric. Add a dash of fresh peanuts.



# KKMSS Smoothie

For some who prefer to drink juices, here is the recipe:

## KKMSS Smoothie

*Good for 8 cups*

### Ingredients

- 5 cups each of fresh leaves of *kamote*, *kangkong*, *malunggay*, *sili* and *saluyot*
- 10 cups of chopped fresh pineapple or watermelon fruits

### Procedure

1. Wash, dry, and chop *kamote*, *kangkong*, *malunggay*, *saluyot*, and *sili* leaves.
2. Put the chopped leaves in a blender.
3. Add the chopped fresh pineapple or watermelon fruits.
4. Blend until smooth.
5. Put in a pitcher, then refrigerate.
6. Serve cold with crushed ice (optional).

# How to wash vegetables, fruits, and leaves

*By Dr. Jaime Galvez Tan*

We want to make sure vegetables, fruits and leaves are clean, especially those from the public market. Here's Dr. Jaime Galvez Tan's formula for properly washing them.

## How to Wash Vegetables, Fruits, and Leaves

### Ingredients

- 2 liters of water
- 1 tablespoon baking soda
- 1 tablespoon natural vinegar
- 1 tablespoon virgin coconut oil (VCO)

### Procedure

1. Mix all four ingredients in a bowl.
2. Soak washed vegetable in the mixture for no more than 10 minutes.
3. Rinse thoroughly before serving.

**Note:** If you have more to wash, follow the same proportion above.

## B. Plants that are Good for Tea and Juice and are Natural Breath Fresheners

### **Tea**

Guyabano  
Luyang Dilaw  
Pandan  
Tarragon  
Tsaang Gubat

### **Juice**

Balimbing  
Calamansi

### **Natural Breath Freshener**

Stevia  
Yerba Buena



Photo courtesy of Sonya Garcia  
of Sonya's Garden in Tagaytay.

# TEA

Guyabano

Luyang Dilaw

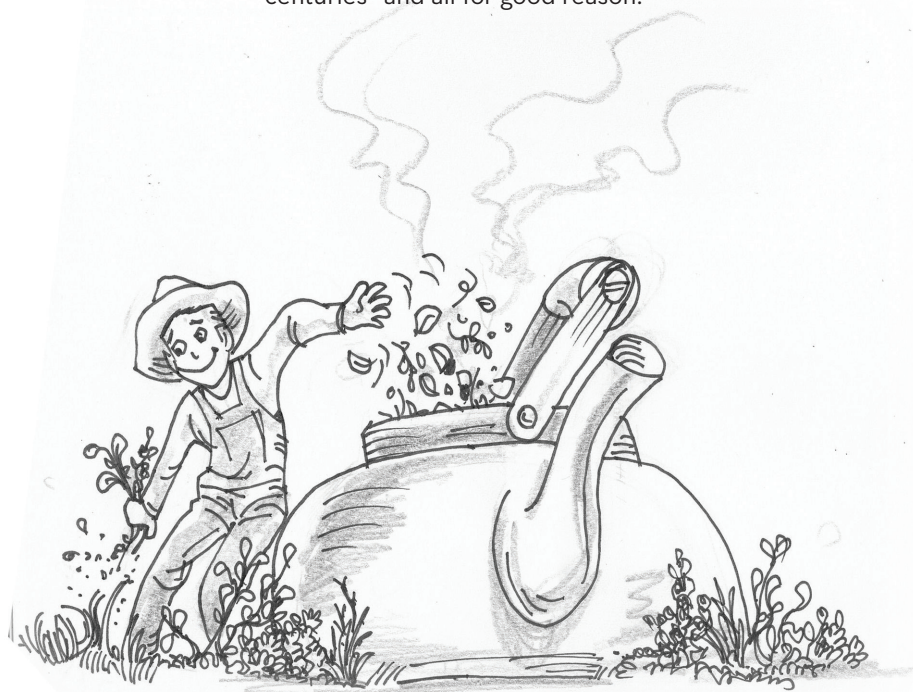
Pandan

Tarragon

Tsaang Gubat

It is nice to have hot tea from freshly picked leaves after a good meal or for mid-morning or mid-afternoon snacks.

It's time to put the kettle on! Several researches have shown that a variety of teas may boost your immune system, fend off inflammation or even push back some diseases. Slowly sipping a cup of herbal tea everyday calms and impact your total well-being. People all over the world have been drinking tea for centuries—and all for good reason!







# Guyabano

*Soursop; Annona muricata*

*Guyabano* is a small tree that everyone should have in the backyard. Its fruits oval shaped with sort spines skin are rich in Vitamin C and can boost the immune system. I like to eat the fresh fruit before it fully ripens. Good to make juice, too. Leaves can be boiled as tea.

The Department of Science and Technology Industrial Technology Development Institute (DOST ITDI) promotes *guyabano* as a natural dietary health supplement due to its flavonoid content which inhibits or prevent growth of viruses.

## Propagation and care

Propagate *guyabano* with seeds. It loves direct sunlight. Fertilize with dried livestock manure or vermicast.

## Fresh Guyabano Tea

### Ingredients

- 8-10 pieces of young fresh *guyabano* leaves
- 5 cups water

### Procedure

1. Boil water in a kettle.
2. While the water is boiling, add the fresh *guyabano* leaves and let it boil for another 15 minutes.
3. Serve hot.

# Luyang Dilaw

*Turmeric; Curcuma longa*

*Luyang dilaw* or turmeric is part of the ginger family and its roots are used in cooking.

*Luyang dilaw* is the main spice in curry and gives curry its yellow color. This spice has been used as a medicinal herb for its anti-inflammatory and antioxidant qualities.

Many drink turmeric tea to improve digestion, promote weight loss, slow down aging process and protect from infection.

Cynthia Subijano says that to boost her family's immune system she boils turmeric with *malunggay* leaves and then adds *calamansi* before serving. She says they have not gotten colds or any sickness since the start of the lockdown due to the COVID19 pandemic.

## Propagation and care

Propagate *luyang dilaw* with divisions of its rhizomes. It grows well in loose and sandy soil under partial shade to full sun but sometimes sensitive to hot sun especially during summer.



## Turmeric Tea

*Cynthia Subijano*

### Ingredients

- 6 cups of water
- 3-5 pieces of turmeric, pressed or cut
- 5-6 stalks of *malunggay*
- Sweetener (sugar, honey, or stevia)

### Procedure

1. Put all of the ingredients in a casserole.
2. Let them boil for 15 minutes under low flame.
3. Strain the leaves and turmeric.
4. Pour them in cups and add 2-3 *calamansi* per cup.
5. Add sweetener (optional) then serve.



# Pandan

*Screw pine; Pandan amaryllifolius*

*Pandan* is an evergreen, upright plant with fragrant leaves. The plant is cultivated for its leaves, which are widely used for flavoring. They are highly aromatic and often added to rice and desserts for their fragrance.

*Pandan* leaves can also be used as a natural air freshener in rooms and vehicles. A special bonus is that the smell of *pandan* leaves is known to repel cockroaches and makes them go away.

In Flor's Garden, we serve lemon grass tea with pandan leaves, especially after a meal. So refreshing!

## Propagation and care

To propagate *pandan*, detach one offshoot with its roots from the parent plant (either pull it with a slight force or use a garden spade or a sharp knife, if necessary). Plant the offshoot on moist ground or in a pot with good drainage.

You may also try to grow some by just keeping cuttings in water until roots sprout then planting them in the ground. In summer, water the plants daily.



# Tarragon

*Tarragon; Artemisia dracunculus*

Tarragon is an herb with aromatic leaves used for cooking. It contains beneficial nutrients. It is low in calories and a source of potassium. Served as tea, tarragon is a diuretic. It also enhances the appetite. Its leaves are used for soups and dishes with fish, beef, chicken, asparagus, and eggs.

In Flor's Garden, we serve tarragon tea after a meal. Sonya of Sonya's Garden in Tagaytay says tarragon tea relieves flatulence (gas) and soothes your digestive system.

Sonya's recipe below:

## Propagation and care

Propagate tarragon with stem cuttings taken early in the morning. It is grown in sandy soil and prefers partial shade.



## Tarragon Tea

*Sonya's Garden*

### Ingredients

- 2-3 cups of hot water
- 3-5 pieces of tarragon leaves

### Procedure

1. Pour hot water in a tea pot with few sprigs of tarragon leaves.
2. Steep for a few minutes until the water turns greenish.
3. Serve.





# Tsaang Gubat

*Wild Tea: Carmona retusa*

*Tsaang gubat*, or “Tea from the Forest” is included in the Department of Health’s Ten (10) approved medicinal plants. It is used for the treatment of stomach ache, abdominal pain, and diarrhea.

Boiled leaves drunk as tea can relieve stomach ache. Leaves are also good as mouthwash with their fluoride content, preventing tooth decay.

*Tsaang gubat* is also used for landscaping and bonsai making. *Tsaang gubat* plants which are shaped like animals are available in plant shops for gardens.

## Propagation and care

Propagate tsaang gubat with seeds and branch cuttings. It grows in any soil condition under direct sun.

# JUICE

Balimbing

Calamansi

There's more to the *balimbing* or star fruit than eating it with salt or pickling it with vinegar. Why not juice it? A refreshing glass of *balimbing* smoothie is loaded with diseases-fighting vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and fiber.





# Balimbing

*Carambola; Averrhoa carambola*

*Balimbing* is a popular backyard tree that is known for its often sour and star-shaped fruit when cut across. Our *balimbing* tree planted by my mother is a small native that provides us with fruits practically everyday!

*Balimbing* is known to be a good source of vitamins B, and C, iron, and potassium. The fruit is known to have medicinal values—to stimulate appetite, relieve diarrhea and dysentery, as well as reduce blood sugar level.

The fruit is eaten ripe and is a good thirst quencher. It is also added in cooking meat dishes and making candied sweets.

In Flor's Garden, we serve freshly picked natural *balimbing* juice. Here is the recipe on the side column.

## Propagation and care

*Balimbing* is propagated with seeds from its fruits. It can also be grafted or marcotted. It can adapt to any soil under direct sun. To enhance its fruit-bearing quality, fertilize it with dried livestock manure or vermicast.



## Natural Fresh Balimbing Juice

### Ingredients

- Ripe *balimbing* fruits
- Water (1:3 water)
- Sweetener: Sugar, honey, or muscovado (to taste)
- Ice (optional)

### Procedure

1. Collect freshly picked ripe balimbing fruits.
2. Wash them thoroughly, cut into pieces.
3. Put in a blender. Blend until smooth.
4. Strain the juice with the use of clean cloth.
5. Add water to the concentrated juice.
6. Add sweetener to taste.
7. Add ice.
8. Serve cold fresh balimbing juice.
9. Optional: Cut *balimbing* fruit crosswise and add a slice to tip of the glass.





# Calamansi

*Philippine Lime or Philippine Lemon; Citrus microcarpa*

*Calamansi* is a citrus plant that is indigenous to the Philippines. The fruit looks like a smaller version of orange or lemon but with strong, sour taste. It contains vitamins C, and is anti-inflammatory and antioxidant.

When I was young, I remember calamansi juice in pitcher readily available in Tia Nena Lazaro's refrigerator, which my Lazaro cousins (Angel III, Delfin, Amelia and Ismael) called "manshade." As everyone in their family is intelligent, the talk is (that the juice must have contributed to their being wise and healthy).

## Propagation and care

Propagate *calamansi* with seeds or marcot. Water it only when the top layer of the soil dries. Place it under direct full sun.

Prune branches so they grow better and become more fruitful. We use vermicast to fertilize our *calamansi* to bear many fruits.





## Pink/Purple *Calamansi* Juice

### Ingredients

- 10-15 pieces of *calamansi* fruits
- 5 pieces blue ternate flowers
- 2 tablespoons of hot water
- 8 tablespoons of sugar, honey, or *muscovado*, or your preferred sweetener
- 1 pitcher of water
- Ice
- Note: Number of flowers depend on the desired color.

### Procedure

1. Wash the *calamansi* fruits thoroughly. Cut them into half, squeeze the juice and remove the seeds.
2. Pour the juice into a pitcher then add water.
3. To add blue ternate color to the mixture, put the fresh or dried blue ternate flowers in a glass. Add 2-3 tablespoons of hot water and stir until the water turns blue. Add this to pitcher with *calamansi* juice.
4. Add preferred sweetener according to taste.
5. Add ice (optional).
6. Serve the fresh purple or pink *calamansi* juice.

My sister, Kay, adds a pinch of salt to *calamansi* juice.

# NATURAL BREATH FRESHENER

Stevia  
Yerba Buena

After each meal, it is nice to drink tea and also have a breath freshener.

Try something natural. Take leaves of *yerba buena* and mint. Try it.

After a meal, try steeping mint and stevia leaves together in hot water. This herbal tea is not only refreshing, it has some health benefits too—such as better digestion, reduced pain from headaches and of course, fresher breath.



# Stevia

*Sugarleaf; Stevia rebaudiana*

Stevia is an herb with natural sweetness from its leaves. It is considered a substitute for sugar with no carbohydrate, and no calories. It tastes so good when eaten raw. Fresh and dry leaves are good for coffee, tea, and any drink. It is 300% sweeter than sugar but amazingly with no effect on the blood sugar level and it also helps control it.

Maura de Leon's Sweet and Fit Stevia Farm, is the Philippines' first stevia farm for commercial market. She introduced the first Stevia sweetener with the brand name Sweet & Fit Stevia by GIDC (Glorious Industrial & Development Corporation), which is now available in drugstores and supermarkets.

## Propagation and Care

Stevia is propagated mainly with cuttings and by seeds. It loves loamy, well-drained soil and direct sun. In Flor's Garden, we cut off flowers of stevia plants to produce more healthy leaves.



Photo courtesy of Maura De Leon of Glorius Blend Sweet and Fit Stevia in Bulacan.





# Yerba Buena

*Mentha; Menthe cordifolia*

*Yerba buena* or mint is an herb with a menthol taste. The word *Yerba buena* means “good herb.” It is used for culinary, medicinal, and aromatic purposes.

Its aromatic leaves are edible and used as spice in cooking. It also freshens breath after meals and aids in digestion. The sweet and menthol leaves may be eaten as raw or made into tea. Fresh leaves are used to garnish fruits and desserts. They are also used to enhance the flavor of a dish.

This herb is also used as poultice for insect bites and applied to temples and tooth cavities to alleviate pain. Leaf decoction is used as diuretic and is known to provide relief from stomach ache, menstrual pain, and respiratory ailments.

## Propagation and care

Propagate *yerba buena* with rhizomes, which can be planted in ground or in containers. It prefers moist, loose soil but it can also withstand dry conditions. Plant it in partly shaded areas.

## C. Plants for Colds and Cough

Lagundi

Luya

Oregano

Sambong

Caught a cold? Healing is closer than you might think. In fact, you may find it in your garden or in your kitchen—here are some of the plants that yield unexpected health-giving comfort and medicinal benefits for colds and cough.





Photo courtesy of Dr. Abraham Pascual, Chairman of Pascual Laboratories.

# Lagundi

*Five-Leaf Chaste Tree; Vitex negundo*

*Lagundi* is a small tree with many branches. It has five leaves in a stem and has lovely light purple bluish flowers.

Boiled leaves used as tea are known to cure colds, cough, and asthma, and can reduce fever. Pounded leaves are applied to tooth cavities to relieve toothache. Mass of *lagundi* leaves applied on forehead and temples relieve headaches.

My daughter Tricia, who is based in Guam, regularly orders ASCOF syrup made of *lagundi* leaves from Philippine drugstores, for her children whenever they have cough and colds.

## Propagation and care

*Lagundi* is propagated with branch cuttings and seeds. It can grow in any soil under direct sun.





# Luya

*Ginger; Zingiber officinale*

*Luya* or ginger is a popular spice plant whose root has a distinct lemony flavor and tastes mildly hot.

It is used as spice, condiment, and food flavoring. Ginger tea is used for treatment of respiratory ailments, indigestion, gas, and stomach pain.

When I have a sore throat, I drink ginger tea. I also chew small pieces of ginger and just leave them in my mouth for some time.

We also serve lemongrass hot tea with ginger—an aromatic and healthy drink.

## Propagation and care

Propagate *luya* with division of its rhizomes or rootstock. It grows well in loose and sandy soil, under partial shade or morning sun.







# Oregano

*Oregano; Coleus aromaticus*

Oregano is an aromatic herb known as remedy for respiratory ailment. It has antioxidant and antimicrobial properties. It is used for treatment of cough and colds, asthma, and bronchitis.

My mother used oregano leaves as an expectorant for my brothers when they were young. She would place fresh oregano leaves over almost cooked rice to steam. Then she would crush the leaves to get the oregano juice for my brothers to drink.

We now make syrup from fresh oregano leaves so it is readily available. Here are the steps on making Oregano Syrup on the side column.

By the way, rats do not like the smell of oregano leaves.

## Propagation and care

Propagate with stem cuttings and through germination of seeds. Plant in good draining soil under direct sunlight. Water only when dry.



## Oregano Syrup

### Ingredients

- 2 kilograms fresh leaves of oregano
- 1 kilogram *muscovado* sugar or honey  
(Ratio: 2 leaves : 1 sweetener)

### Procedure

1. Collect fresh leaves of oregano in early morning.
2. Wash, dry, and chop the leaves.
3. Mix the chopped leaves and muscovado sugar or honey in a jar.
4. Cover the jar tightly.
5. Ferment for 7-10 days.
6. Extract the juice.
7. Put the extracted juice in a clean bottle with cover.
8. Keep in refrigerator or shady area.



# Sambong

*Camphor Plant; Blumea balsamifera*

*Sambong* is a shrub with aromatic leaves. Leaves are boiled with water and used as tea and to treat stomach ache and encourage urination. They are also used as an expectorant against colds and cough and as a water bath for mothers after childbirth.

## Propagation and care

Propagate sambong with stem cuttings or seeds. It can grow in any soil condition under direct sun. But it grows best in sandy loam, with good drainage or no water retention.

## D. Plants for Bruises and Sore Joints

Ikmo  
Katakataka  
Mayana

There are a number of herbal remedies that can soothe your bruises and sore joints. These plants can aid in reducing discomfort and help in the wound healing process faster.

For bruises and sore joints - ikmo, katakataka, and mayana are handy plants to have in the garden.







# Ikmo

*Betel Pepper; Piper betle*

*Ikmo* is known as “*buyo*” in the Visayan region. It is a climber plant with fragrant leaves.

For the sore part of the body choose big *ikmo* leaves: wash, wipe and clean them. Then apply oil on each leaf and heat it over candle fire then apply it to the sore part. Leaves are also used in massage in a similar way.

## Propagation and care

Propagate *ikmo* plants with stem cuttings. They need trellises and grow in partial shade. They can grow in any soil condition. But it is good to add fertilizer or decayed mixture of plants, such as, leaves and grasses to the soil, from time to time.



# Katakataka

*Miracle Plant; Bryophyllum pinnatum*

*Katakataka* is an herb with thick, succulent and fleshy leaves. *Katakataka* means “unbelievable,” because of its amazing characteristic. The plantlets grow on the edge of the leaves. The leaves may be inserted in the pages of a book. After a week or two, *katakataka* may be seen on the edges of the leaves. They may then be detached from the parent plant.

*Katakataka* leaves are considered as astringent, antiseptic, and anti-inflammatory. Heated leaves over candles maybe applied to sore joints, body aches and sprains to give a soothing effect. They are also good for eczema, burns, and boils.

Once, Carol Dominguez, CEO of John Clements Consultants, together with the Filipina Circle of CEOs, visited Flor’s Garden. She bruised her knee the night before. She inquired what plant is good for her bruises as she could not move freely. Fely, Flor’s Garden Coordinator, pounded some *katakataka* leaves and applied them to her bruise. Before lunch she told us that the pain was gone and she could already move comfortably, thanks to *katakataka*.

## Propagation and care

Propagate *katakataka* with leaves, cuttings, and seeds. When plantlets grow at the edge of the leaves, detach then plant them on ground or in a pot. They grow best in well-drained soil and under direct sunlight.







# Mayana

*Coleus; Coleous scutellarioides*

*Mayana* is an herb with colorful foliage. Thus, it is popular as a houseplant and in gardens. Some leaf colors are yellow, green, red, pink, purple, and blue. *Mayana* certainly adds beauty to any surrounding.

Crushed or pounded *mayana* leaves are used to apply to bruises, sprain, and headaches. Juiced leaves are also used to stop mild bleeding of wounds.

## Propagation and care

Propagate *mayana* with stem cuttings and seeds. Water the plant daily. It thrives in moist, well-drained soil. It loves bright light to show off its vibrant colors, but not direct noon sun.

Prune *mayana* tops regularly to make the plant bushy and full.



# E. Common Anti-Fungal and Cleaning Plants

Akapulko  
Kamantigi







# Akapulko

*Ringworm bush; Senna alata*

*Akapulko* is a small tree with dark green leaves and nice bright yellow torch-like flowers.

The leaves have antifungal properties. They are pounded and the juice is applied directly or added with lukewarm water to wash skin, remove itchiness, and treat skin sores caused by ringworm, scabies, eczema, herpes, and insect bites. Its flowers and seeds are used as purgative.

Once, the father of our worker had itchiness all over his body. He boiled fresh *akapulko* leaves then cool them. He used the liquid as bath water. He did so for a few more times until the itchiness was gone.

## Propagation and care

Propagate *akapulko* with seeds and by stem cuttings. The plant is grown easily in any soil condition but best in damp areas. It needs direct sun.

# Kamantigi

*Balsam; Impatiens balsamina*

*Kamantigi* is a succulent herb with antifungal properties. Its flowers are pink, white, red, and purple. It may have variegated petals. Its seeds explode when matured.

To use the leaves for treatment, crush and apply them externally to bruises and sore parts of the body. Leaf juice is used as treatment of warts and rheumatism.

Chopped *kamantigi* leaves are soaked in water overnight then sprayed on plants to get rid of aphids.

## Propagation and care

Propagate *kamantigi* plant mainly with seeds. The plant can be grown easily in any soil condition. But it grows best in damp areas. Grows well in partial shade.



## IV. Uses and Preparation

Two main ways of using a plant or part of a plant are (1) by applying it externally to an affected area and (2) by taking it internally. Taken internally, part of the plants is eaten fresh or raw directly, or boiled with water and taken as tea. It may also be taken indirectly when cooked with food we eat.

External application of medicinal plants is limited to poultice and soaking.





## Internal Applications

We can eat fresh leaves of the *talinum*, *takipkuhol* and others as raw or added to salads.

Tea, as an aromatic drink, may be made by adding boiling or hot water over herbs—their leaves or flowers. To make good herbal tea, choose proper herbs. You may grow your own herbs to make tea from either the fresh or dried leaves. Fresh leaves are best to harvest early morning. To dry leaves, bundle them in a stem and hang the bundle upside down in a warm shady place. You may cover the bundle with paper bag to catch the leaves when they dry.

So tea making is simply boiling water and adding an herb or parts of it. We hear of steeping, decoction, and infusion. These are just different ways of preparing the tea.

Generally, parts of the plant such as flowers and delicate leaves are infused while hardy or tougher parts, like, the roots, barks and woody stems, are decocted.

**Steeping or brewing** – In this process, the herb is submerged in water. You may either put the leaves in a cup then add hot water or put leaves and roots in water then boil. Adding honey or sugar is optional.

**Decoction** – This process is done to maximize getting an herb's peculiar properties like to. Mix two cups of water and the herb then boil. When the water is reduced to one cup—the result is called decoction.

**Infusion** – This requires pouring hot water over the herb's leaves, waiting for a period of time (called seeping), then removing the leaves before drinking. The result is a strongly brewed tea.

Tips on preparation of Herbal Teas:

- When using dried leaves, use only half the dosage prescribed for fresh leaves.
- It is best to use earthen or glass utensils when boiling decoctions. Avoid using stainless steel utensils.



- When boiling leaves and other plant parts, do not cover the pot. Boil in lowest flame available.
- Teas are best used within the day as they lose potency after some time. Dispose any leftover after one day. It helps to keep the tea fresh during the day if you keep it lukewarm in a thermos.

## External Applications

*“And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs.  
And they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered.”*  
2 KINGS 20:7

External applications of medicinal plants are ancient healing methods and folksy home remedies, which are easy to do.

In the countryside, external applications are practical as the medicinal plants may be available in the surrounding environment.

**Poultice** – Leaves or parts of the plant are pounded or crushed repeatedly then applied directly to areas of the body that are painful. There are variations in poultice preparations, such as, adding oil to parts of the plants used and heating them over a flame before applying them to affected body parts, to achieve a soothing effect.

This popular home remedy has been used to treat inflammation, insect bites, and wounds, and to promote healing. Leaves often used are *mayana*, *akapulko*, and *ikmo*.

**Soaking** – This is the act of making something completely wet—“He gave it a good drenching.” Example of soaking is the foot spa. In Flor’s Garden, you may soak your feet in a basin with lukewarm water with little coarse sea salt, stones (*panghilod*), and *akapulko* leaves, which have antifungal properties. It is a soothing and relaxing process.

# V.

## Top 10 Herbal Medicines in the Philippines Approved by the Department of Health

- 1. Akapulko • *Cassia Alta*/"Bayabas-Bayabasan" and "Ringworm Bush"**  
Used to treat ringworms and skin fungal infections.
- 2. Ampalaya • *Momordica Charantia*/"Bitter Gourd" or "Bitter Melon"**  
Most known as a treatment of diabetes.
- 3. Bawang • *Allium Sativum*/"Garlic"**  
Reduces cholesterol in the blood and helps control blood pressure.
- 4. Bayabas • *Psidium Guajava*/"Guava"**  
Used as an antiseptic, to disinfect wounds. Also, as a mouthwash to treat tooth decay and gum infection.
- 5. Lagundi • *Vitex Negundo*/The "5-Leaved Chaste Tree"**  
Its main use is for the relief of coughs and asthma.
- 6. Niyog-Niyogan • *Quisqualis Indica L.*/"Chinese Honey Suckle Vine"**  
It is effective in the elimination of intestinal worms. Only the dried matured seeds are medicinal. Crack and ingest the dried seeds two hours after eating (5 to 7 seeds for children and 8 to 10 seeds for adults). If one dose does not eliminate the worms, wait a week before repeating the dose.
- 7. Sambong • *Blumea Balsamifera*/"Blumea Camphora"**  
A diuretic that helps in the excretion of urinary stones. It can also be used as an edema. Good for sore throat and cough.
- 8. Tsaang-Gubat • *Ehretia Microphylla Lam***  
Prepared like tea, effective in treating intestinal motility and also as a mouthwash since the leaves of this shrub have high fluoride content.
- 9. Ulasimang Bato / Pansit-Pansitan • *Peperomia Pellucida***  
Effective in fighting arthritis and gout. Leaves can be eaten fresh (about a cupful) as salad or for tea. Boil a cup of clean chopped leaves in 2 cups of water. Boil for 15 to 20 minutes. Strain and let cool. Drink a cup after meals.
- 10. Yerba Buena • *Clinopodium Douglasii*/"Peppermint"**  
Used as an analgesic to relieve body aches and pain. It can be taken internally as a decoction or externally, by pounding the leaves and apply them directly on the affected area.

# VI.

## Most Common Herbal Medicine Formulations by Dr. Jaime Galvez Tan

<i>For cough and colds</i>	Salabat with calamansi and honey and dahon o hilaw na bunga ng Sampalok, Lagundi, Luya, Oregano, Sambong
<i>For diabetes</i>	ABCD - Ampalaya, Banaba, Camote, and Duhat
<i>For anti-cholesterol and gallstones</i>	Luyang dilaw, Banaba, and Garlic
<i>For diarrhea</i>	ABC - Leaves of Avocado, Bayabas, and Caimito
<i>Anti-asthma</i>	Lagundi, young shoots of Mango leaves, and Ginger
<i>Urinary Tract Infection</i>	Sambong, Buko juice, Pandan, Buhok ng Mais, and Tanglad
<i>Anti-hypertensive</i>	Balbas pusa, Sambong, Tanglad, and Pandan
<i>For heart diseases and kidney failure</i>	KKMSS - Shoots of Kamote, Kangkong, Malunggay, Sili, and Saluyot
<i>For fever</i>	Alagaw, Tanglad, and Yerba Buena
<i>For hyperacidity</i>	Luyang dilaw, Cabbage juice, Aloe vera juice, and Okra
<i>For liver disease</i>	Sampa-sampalukan, Luyang dilaw, Labanos, and Takipkuhol

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# ABOUT THE AUTHOR, EDITOR, AND ARTIST



## AUTHOR

FLOR G. TARRIELA is a passionate gardener and environmentalist. She developed Flor's Garden in Antipolo. She co-authored the book *Ooops...Dont Throw those Weeds Away!* And

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Flor is the first woman Board Chair of the Philippine National Bank. She is the first Filipina Vice President of Citibank N.A. and a former Undersecretary of Finance.

She is married to gentleman farmer Atty. Ed Tarriela (who established Ed's Learning Center), with whom she has three children Edmin, Ted, and Tricia. She is Lola to five grandchildren (Nando, Nat, CJ, RB and EF) who she calls her gems.



## EDITOR

DR. CORAZON PB. CLAUDIO is an engineer-economist whose work is on sustainable development (SD). Photography, farming in pots, and writing are her hobbies. She has written over 500 published articles and has authored or edited several books.

Cora has set up and managed some organizations in the public and private sectors and has served as senior scientist or adviser in SD programs covering the ASEAN, Asia-Pacific region, and South America-South Asia. She is now the Convenor/Chair of the Climate Crisis and SD Network (CCSDN) and Board Trustee of the Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication, Asiapro Foundation, Business for Sustainable Development, Philippine Foundation for Science and Technology, and a few others.

She is a Balik Scientist and TOWNS Awardee. But her most important role is as mother to Toby and Dr. Babes, Lola to their three sons, and mother of Executive Pastor Liz of Favor Church.



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Photo of Flor G. Tarriela courtesy of Manila Times.









































