

Nutritive value of some of the commonly eaten greens (100g. of edible portion)

Nutrients	Mint	Amaranth	Spinach	Drumstick leaves	Coriander leaves	Gogu
Calories	4.8	4.5	26	92	44	56
Protein (g)	4.8	4	2	6.7	3.3	1.7
Calcium (mg)	200	397	73	440	184	172
Iron (mg)	15.6	3.49	1.14	0.85	1.42	2.28
Carotene (ug)	1620	5520	5580	6780	6918	2898
Thiamine (mg)	0.05	0.03	0.03	0.06	0.05	0.07
Riboflavin (mg)	0.26	0.30	0.26	0.05	0.06	0.39
Vitamin C (mg)	27	99	28	220	135	20

GLVs - The Treasure Trove of Nutrients

- Rich sources of vitamins and minerals
- Prevents Iron deficiency anemia
- Builds strong bones
- Promotes good eye sight and healthy skin
- Fights cancers as they contain antioxidants, phytochemicals, and other health enhancing properties
- Contains dietary fiber which aids in digestion
- Helps plan a healthy balanced meal as they are inexpensive and easily available

The Goodness of GREENS



Extension and Training Division
National Institute of Nutrition
(Indian Council of Medical Research)
Hyderabad-500007, INDIA
2013

Green leafy vegetables (GLVs) are vital for growth and good health as they contain all important nutrients. In India a wide range of greens are consumed, the more popular ones being spinach, amaranth, gogu, fenugreek, drumstick leaves, mint etc.

GLVs are particularly rich in minerals like iron and calcium. Iron deficiency leads to anemia, a common health problem among pregnant and lactating women, adolescent girls and also children. Inclusion of GLVs in daily diet would help to prevent anemia and promote good health.

GLVs are also a rich source of many vitamins including beta carotene and vitamin-C. In India, thousands of children under five years of age go blind every year due to lack of vitamin A. Beta carotene in GLVs gets converted in the body to form vitamin A which prevents blindness. To preserve vitamin C content in greens, prolonged cooking should be avoided, as this nutrient, which keeps gums in good condition is lost on overcooking. Greens also contain some of the b-complex vitamins. The recommended dietary allowance is as follows: adult man 40g/day, preschool children (1-3 years) - 40g/day, preschool children (4-6 years)- 50g/day, and for boys and girls beyond 10 years of age - 50 g/day.

It is wrongly believed that greens cause diarrhea in children. So, most mothers abstain from giving this nutritious food stuff to their

children. Several bacterial / germ/ insects and other extraneous matter contaminate greens through water and soil. And if not washed properly, they may cause diarrhea on consumption. All greens must be washed thoroughly under running water to eradicate such contaminations and prevent diarrhea.

Infants should be served greens only after they have been cooked, mashed and sieved so as to remove the fibrous part, which may disturb their delicate digestive system.

To retain the nutritive value of GLVs, excessive water used for cooking should not be thrown away. Always ensure the vessel in which greens are cooked is covered with a lid. Do not dry the leaves in the sun as carotene will be lost. Avoid frying greens.



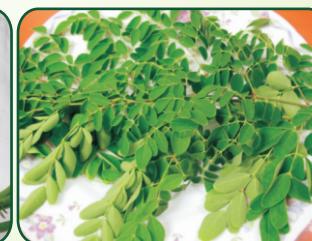
Mint



Spinach



Amaranth



Drumstick leaves

The nutritive value of GLVs should not be judged by its cost which most people wrongly do and discard them as inferior foodstuff. For although inexpensive, GLVs are highly nutritious and they are required by all.

Cultivation of GLVs should be encouraged so that they may be available all through the year. Kitchen gardens, roof gardens, school gardens etc., are ideal for growing green leafy vegetables. Grow trees like drumstick and agathi in your backyard and ensure steady supply of healthy nutrients all round the year.

