

Food Plants International



No. 94, February 2021

Helping the hungry feed themselves well through being good stewards of God's amazing resources

Responsible stewardship of the planet is a Christian responsibility

Often when I am at different churches preaching, people start asking me about food plants. They know that my interests in life embrace both the Bible and food plants. These days some people try to imply that 'faith' is just personal and 'private' and shouldn't impinge on real life issues. No wonder they start to think Christianity is either just an optional personal belief or is irrelevant to life. In one of his last addresses on earth, Jesus said if you were not helping the hungry then you were not a disciple of his.

We need to practice an Earth careful way of life

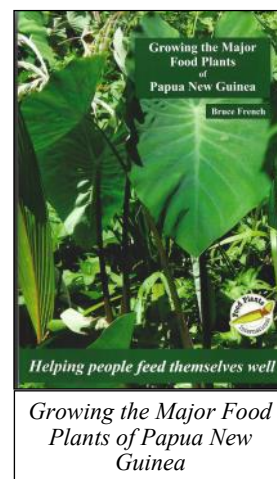
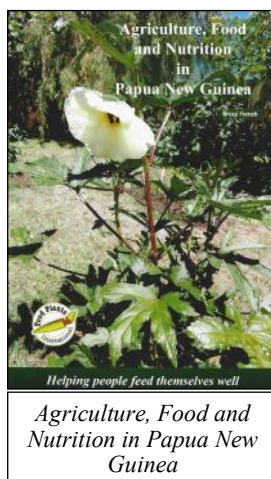
In fact, the Bible at the beginning claims that God made this world, and also made people in God's image for a relationship with him, but then it immediately says that God has delegated to people the care of His creation or tells them to 'serve and preserve' his planet. An amazing illustration is the rainbow. We are told that when we see a rainbow, we should remember God's forever covenant with every living creature in his world. It has meant that for 76 years I have had a fulfilling and enjoyable life. Our lifestyle choices affect everything and should include care of the planet, and respect for all living creatures.

Genesis 9:16 Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember **the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind** on the earth.

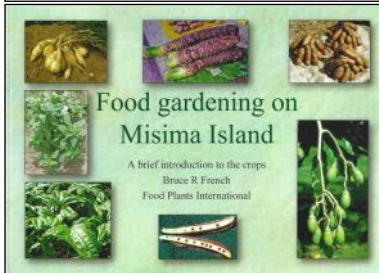


But back to the discussion last Sunday: someone was asking whether various parts of the plants in their gardens were edible, e.g. the leaves, seeds, roots, etc. of their fruit vegetable. This suddenly made me realise that I often simply mention the number of edible species (32,400 species), rather than the total number of edible plant parts. Leaves 9,514, Seeds 4,810, Flowers 2,692, Root 3,708, Fruit 12,494, Stems 1,126, Nuts 914, Palm hearts 376, Nectar 312, Gum 370, etc. These different parts have different food values. I often simplify it to seeds and nuts for zinc, bean seeds for protein, leaves for iron, Vitamin A and folates, and the roots and starchy staples for energy.

Last week we did a launch of our books for Papua New Guinea. They have been available in digital format on our website for a considerable time. But to get them to our real destination – the rural poor in isolated regions, they will need to be in printed form as many of these people do not have suitable computer facilities nor electric power nor internet access. There is something appealing about having a real book that can be held and enjoyed, so I enjoyed seeing samples in print. But this costs money, so we will have to find these resources. One highlight of the launch was an interview with Jennifer Baing-Wako over the internet using Zoom. She is doing a lovely job around Papua New Guinea with TV programmes highlighting local plants. Her organisation "SAVE PNG", has a nice ambiguity in the name. "Save" in Tok Pisin means 'understand' while in English it means 'rescue' or 'look after'. Both meanings go together.



*Food gardening on Misima Island,
Papua New Guinea*



Her programme is now expanding more widely across the Pacific. Not only is she a delightful Christian but was also awarded “Woman of the Year” in PNG recently.

The passage using the rainbow talks about a covenant care for all living things. We have had a cabin on a mountainside on our 20-hectare bush block for 47 years. Several years ago, we got it

classified as “Land for Wildlife” with the associated covenant. This shouldn’t mean we simply abandon it to the animals but should learn to work with the plants and animals in a mutually harmonious manner. Top medical doctors are stressing that if we don’t spend time in the natural environment, stress and depression and suicide become much more serious issues. I have been wondering whether the wildlife can read our “Land-use” sign as increasingly

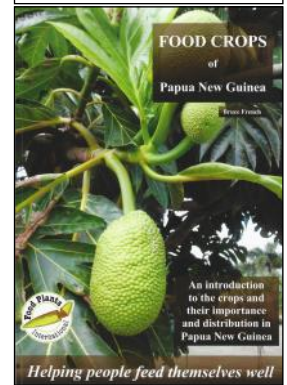


we are seeing a variety of animals making this block their home. And in January, the native grass around our cabin - which is important as a firesafe boundary - puts up a very spiky seed head which means that the wallabies stop mowing our lawn. So, at a height sufficient to remove the spiky flower head but not the wallaby’s meals, I mow this grass – for the mutual benefit of us and the animals. I even have a feeling my

doctor said that I need to get more exercise, so we are all winners.

After a commitment service in a local church that I had previously pastored, Deb and I finished our wedding service and wedding reception on our mountain side property. Our previous cabin got accidentally burnt down and this was just 6 weeks before my first wife Helen died suddenly with a heart attack. So, Deb had a new cabin and a lovely spot for us to celebrate our wedding. And she has not only won the hearts of our family but does an amazing job helping me with food plants. So out of real tragedy can come real good.

*Food Crops of Papua
New Guinea*



Our wedding, 2003

With thanks for your interest, *Bruce*

*Psophocarpus
tetragonolobus
seeds*



*Psophocarpus
tetragonolobus
leaves*



*Psophocarpus
tetragonolobus
roots*



*Psophocarpus
tetragonolobus
flowers*

*Psophocarpus
tetragonolobus
pods*



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