

Amaranth taste test case study

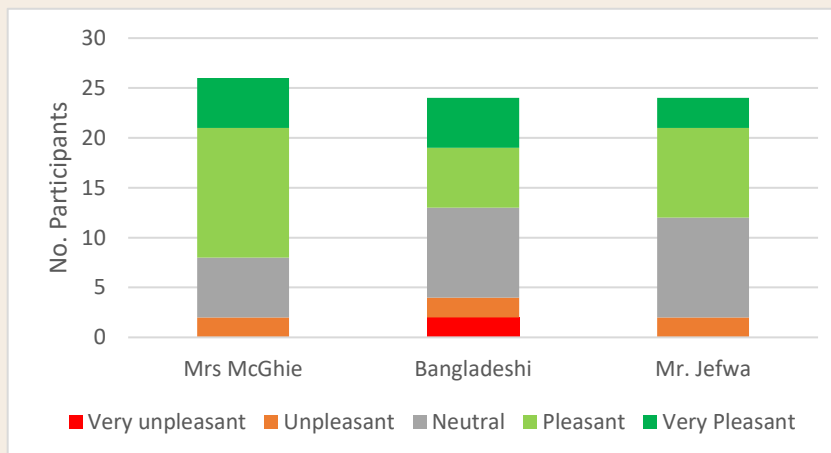
Amaranth leaves were steamed lightly for five minutes at the two urban sites at the Comfrey Project and Ecopark, and the qualities compared.

Participants were asked to rate them as 1–5 for pleasantness, rank them in order of preference, and score them for taste qualities such as bland, bitter, salty, earthy and grassy.



Key findings

- People enjoyed taking part.
- It encouraged discussion among the group.
- People were surprised there were noticeable differences between the three varieties, despite them looking very similar when prepared.
- People expressed strong preferences for each variety, but they weren't always consistent.
- Mrs McGhie scored highest on taste tests. It was associated with positive flavours such as 'grassy' and 'earthy'.
- One Bangladeshi participant commented that the flavour of the Jamaican variety Mrs McGhie was best on its own, but the slightly more bitter flavours of the Bangladeshi variety would work better in a traditionally spiced dish.



Challenges:

- Many people commented that this was not the way that they would eat amaranth, so it was not a realistic way to assess it. However, adding flavouring would have masked any differences between the varieties.
- It was more difficult than expected to achieve complete consistency in the way that each sample was prepared