

Could Africa's own indigenous 'superfoods' rival GMOs?

Superfoods exist in Africa thanks not to the genius and beneficence of a foreign company, but rather through millennia of interactions between Africa's farmers and its landscape. And while their popularity waned in recent decades as urbanization has swept through the continent, they're gaining renewed interest from food-security experts and urban dwellers alike, reports a [new article](#) by Rachel Cernansky in *Nature*.

Cernansky focuses on the work of Mary Abukutsa-Onyango, a horticulturalist at Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology in Kenya, who has since the 1990s been a kind of Johnny Appleseed for reviving appetites for indigenous vegetables in Africa.

In a 2010 paper, Abukutsa-Onyango demonstrated the nutritional punch packed by these foodstuffs. African vegetables like the leaves of amaranth, pumpkin, and cowpea (black-eyed pea) plants outshine rival western greens that have been introduced into African agriculture over the past century.

Unlike "exotic" (i.e., non-native to Africa) vegetables like kale and cabbage, these crops are adapted to Africa's soils and growing conditions. "Most of the traditional varieties are ready for harvest much faster than non-native crops, so they could be promising options if the rainy seasons become more erratic—one of the predicted outcomes of global warming," Cernansky writes.

It's important to remember that the best, cheapest solutions aren't necessarily the ones that emerge from patent-seeking laboratories.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [Here's How Africa Can Fix Hunger Without "Help" From Monsanto](#)