

The Magnificent Moringa Oleifera Trees for Life

by Karin Fields

What if I told you that you could go into your own backyard and pick from a tree that will give you four times the calcium of milk, three times the potassium of bananas, seven times the vitamin C of oranges, four times the vitamin A of carrots, and two times the protein of yogurt? What if I told you that this tree is easy to cultivate in South Florida, grows fast like a weed, is drought tolerant, and tastes delicious in a salad?

Ladies and gentlemen, let me introduce you to the Moringa Tree. The world's new "Superfood!" Yes, it's true. This powerhouse, multipurpose tree satisfies so many needs. It is a great source of leafy green protein and a year round great source of vitamins and minerals. The USDA says this tree contains 18 of the 20 amino acids, and nine of the essentials.

The Moringa Tree is native to Northern India and Africa, and is cheaply and easily grown in tropical areas. It is a beautiful, fluffy tree that can grow up to 20 feet, and is perfect for the South Florida landscape. It loves our sandy soil!

Moringa is revered in many different parts of the world, and many underdeveloped countries rely on it as a food source. The leaves can be dried and will retain many of its nutrients. The immature pods are often eaten like green beans, and when mature can be roasted. The leaves can be eaten raw or cooked like spinach. The

liquid you get from squeezing the bark is used medicinally to heal cuts and scrapes. The roots are used to make tea. You can even press the seeds and

get the Moringa oil which can be used for cooking. This oil is also used in cosmetics. Every part of this plant is edible...I guess this is why it has been fondly nicknamed "The Miracle Tree."

So...have you had your Moringa today?

Karin Fields, The Edible Gardening Gal, has more than 20 years of vegetable

gardening experience in South Florida. A published author, she gives informative talks on vegetable gardening, teaching both children and adults how to grow their own food.

