

គំរោងសួនច្បារខ្មែរសំរាប់មនុស្សវ័យចំណាស់

Cambodian Seniors Garden Project

Long Beach, California

The Cambodian Seniors Garden Project was created to help Cambodian elders in Long Beach get out of their houses, meet new people, and get involved in their community. The elders grow a variety of plants, many of which are familiar to mainstream Americans, but have different uses. For instance, *nonoong*, commonly known as loofa, is used in soups. Lemon grass, known as *sluk krey* is used not only in cooking but also to help blood circulation and as a pain reliever with an effectiveness similar to aspirin.

Interesting variations of more familiar vegetables can also be found in Cambodian gardens. The *trobb srouy* is a round, green variety of eggplant that grows on a bush, has a lot of seeds and a slightly bitter taste. The fruit is mashed and put on dried fish and is used in soups or with anything salty. *Krouch saech*, or kaffir lime, is known for its bumpy rind and small size. The leaves are used for seasoning and to add a fresh citrus flavor.

The Senior Program started in 2002 under the auspices of the United Cambodian Community with five members. Today the gardening program is part of the Cambodian Senior Nutrition Program and has 70 active seniors, two garden plots, and a host of other activities such as tai chi (a popular form of martial arts), computer programs, and ESL, all of which are geared toward the special needs of seniors. The project is seen as a method for healing the mind, body, and soul. Through the program, older Cambodian adults are able to share their stories and build new relationships in their new home.





Luffa

No Nong

This tropical vine is an important green vegetable in various dishes. Mainly used for soup the luffa is eaten when the fruit is young and the sponge has not yet become tough. The ripe, dried fruit can also be used as a bath or kitchen sponge.



Lemongrass

Kuel Skey

This plant is usually used as an herb in Cambodian cooking. It is a bushy plant that has a citrus flavor and can be dried and powdered, or used fresh. The soft inner part of the stalk is primarily used due to the outer stalk being too hard to be eaten.



Water Spinach

Traw Kuon

This leafy plant is also known as water grass and is actually an herb. It grows under marshy conditions so the senior gardeners tend to have them soaked constantly. Only the leaves and tender shoots are eaten. The flavor is similar to that of spinach.



Arun Va, community specialist for the group



Cambodian senior gardeners.

garden and vegetable plants



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