

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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‘Miracle vegetable’ to nourish students

The Department of Education’s Health and Nutrition Council (DepEd-HNC) conducts a two-part workshop on the development and standardization of malunggay-based recipes for in-school feeding -- part of the department’s effort to improve the nutrition of public school children.

The second part of the workshop is set on April 20 to 25, 2008 at DAP Center, Tagaytay City. The first part was held last April 5 to 9.

“The department taps into indigenous resources in an effort to overcome nutritional deficiency,” DepEd Secretary Jesli Lapus said. “Planting malunggay trees will translate to huge savings not only for the department but for the families of participants as well,” he added.

The first part of the workshop taught participants how to develop malunggay-based recipes. Meanwhile, the second part will focus on quantification and sensory evaluation. Workshop organizers expect that the participants will update their knowledge and skills in recipe development and standardization and appreciate malunggay’s nutritional benefits.”

According to DepEd-HNC Director Thelma Santos, “Malunggay is the subject of interest in many researches and studies due to its nutritional benefits and its versatility as a plant. According to her malunggay (*Moringa oleifera*) is touted by scientists as the ‘miracle vegetable’ because of the many diseases it can cure.

Malunggay is known to cure beriberi, which is caused by deficiency in Vitamin B1, and rickets, caused by a lack of Vitamin D and Calcium.

Known as Horseradish tree in English, Malunggay originated in India and is widely consumed in the Indian subcontinent, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Southeast Asia.

Its many uses include cropping, animal feeds and is also tapped for biogas and diesel production. It is used as a domestic cleaning agent and fertilizer. Its leaves are an outstanding source of Vitamins A, B1, and C, Calcium, Potassium, and Iron.

DepEd’s School Nutrition Program seeks to provide the nutritional needs of children in public schools. The “Gulayan sa Paaralan” Project was launched last year to promote food security in schools and communities. Alongside malunggay, the department has also been providing full-cream choco milk, iron-fortified noodles and biscuits to targeted public schools nationwide.

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Lapus emphasized that “this initiative will ultimately teach our children the usefulness of this ‘miracle vegetable’ whose benefits outdo those of commercialized vitamins and medicines.”

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