



## UPLAND HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

### **Agroforest Activity: Foods From the Agroforest**

**Objective:** To become familiar with various plants found in the forests of northern Thailand that may be eaten or used in food preparation. Several of such food-producing plants and the method of their uses are listed below. Participants may choose to participate in as many of the following activities as feasible.

**References:** *Plants and People of the Golden Triangle; Plants From the Markets of Thailand*

#### **Activity 1: Cooking Fish/Chicken in a Bamboo Section**

Time Req: 3 to 4 hours

Materials: Machete, mature bamboo (mai sang – *Dendrocalamus strictus* or mai bong – *Bambusa tulda*), purchased chicken or fish (from UHDP or outside of center), banana leaves, UHDP kitchen facility and equipment, spices and rice. Utilize the assistance of an UHDP farm and/or kitchen assistant.

Procedure:

- (1) With UHDP farm assistant, locate and harvest a suitable mai sang bamboo pole and cut out a suitable sections in which to cook chicken or fish. Prepare the sections in which each chicken will be cooked by trimming off one of the section nodes (leaving one node in place).
- (2) With a UHDP farm or kitchen assistant, clean and prepare the chicken or fish prior to inserting into bamboo sections with appropriate spices recommended by UHDP kitchen staff. Seal each bamboo section with banana leaves
- (3) With the help of the kitchen assistant, prepare a fire next to which the bamboo section should be placed. Monitor the cooking of the chicken or fish in the section over approximately 2-3 hours. Completion of cooking is determined by the aroma of the finished curries and when the base and walls of the bamboo sections beginning to show signs of burn. The banana leaf plug might need to be replaced during the cooking process.
- (4) Serve the chicken or fish with rice after it is finished.

#### **Activity 2: Cooking Rice in a Bamboo Section**

Time Req: 1 1/2 hours

Materials: Machete, mature bamboo (mai sang – *Dendrocalamus strictus*), long-grain rice (quantity dependent on the size of the group of trainees), banana leaves, firewood/charcoal. Utilize the assistance of an UHDP farm and/or kitchen assistant.

Procedure:

- (1) With UHDP farm assistant, locate and harvest a suitable mai sang bamboo pole and cut out suitable sections (one or more) in which to cook rice. Prepare sections by trimming off one of the nodes.
- (2) Add rice into each bamboo section until about half full. Then add water up to a level about  $\frac{3}{4}$  full. Seal the bamboo section with banana leaves.
- (3) With the help of UHDP staff prepare a fire next to which the bamboo sections are to be placed. Monitor the cooking of the chicken in the section over approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$  - 1 hours. After  $\frac{1}{2}$  hours or so, check the rice by removing the banana leaf plug and inspecting the softness of the rice. Replug the section and allow rice to cook longer if rice grains are still hard.
- (4) When the cooking is finished, gently cut through the bamboo section to remove the rice.

### **Activity 3: Harvesting and Cooking Either Bamboo or Rattan Shoots**

Time Req: Approximately 1-2 hours

Materials: Machete and/or shoot chisel (siam), rattan (wai nam khao - *Calamus kerrianus* is available all year long) and/or bamboo shoots (mai sang – *Dendrocalamus strictus*, mai bong – *Bambusa tulda*, mai huak – *Thyrsostachys oliveri* or mai rai – *Oxytenanthera albo-ciliata* are available only during the rainy season), spices and other possible ingredients, UHDP kitchen facility and equipment, UHDP farm and/or kitchen staff and rice.

Procedure:

- (1) With UHDP farm assistant, locate and harvest suitable shoots of either bamboo or rattan. For **bamboo shoots**, dig around the base of the shoot and use the special root chisel (siam) to cut the shoot loose. The outer husk layer will need to be removed from around the shoot. For **rattan shoots**, as the stems are covered with numerous long, sharp thorns, special help will be required from an experienced rattan shoot harvester. Once a rattan shoot has been cut away from the rattan clump, the thorny outer layer must be carefully removed with a machete in order to expose the edible, tender inner core of the shoot.

(2) Take either type of shoot to the UHDP kitchen and with the assistance of UHDP kitchen staff, slice the shoots and add with other ingredients to be cooked into various curries or stir-fry dishes.

**Activity 3: Harvesting and Cooking Various Forest Foods (Depending on the Season and Availability).**

Materials: Consult with UHDP farm and kitchen staff

Procedures: Consult with UHDP farm and kitchen staff

Time Req: 1-2 hrs depending on plant and food selections

Forest Foods: The following forest foods are available at UHDP depending on the season:

- (1) **malik mai** (*Oroxylum indicum*) - Flowers (available during the rainy season) and tender pods (available during the rainy – early dry season) may be consumed. Flowers can be boiled and eaten with pepper paste or curried. Tender pods are roasted over an open fire until the peel is charred. The charred peel is then removed and the inner fleshy part be eaten with pepper paste or stir fried with meat and other ingredients.
- (2) **tang luang** (*Trevesia palmata*) – Flowers (cool season) and shoot tips/tender new leaves (available all year) may be eaten. Flowers, shoot tips and tender new leaves may be boiled and/or cooked in curries.
- (3) **cha-om** (*Acacia pennata*) – Tender leave tips (available most of the year) may be cooked in curries.
- (4) **pak hueat** (forest fig leaves/*Ficus lacor*) – Tender leaves and leaf shoots (February – April) may be eaten raw, boiled to be eaten with a dip paste or cooked in curries.
- (5) **Forest banana** (mature blossom and inner stalk/*Musa acuminata*) – Flowers (year round) may be cooked in curries are eaten raw in a salad. The tender inner portion of the stalk may be eaten raw or cooked in curries.