

# Malabar Spinach



**Common Name:** Malabar Spinach, Red Vine or Climbing Spinach

**Botanical Name:** *Basella alba* and *Basella rubra* (not a true spinach)

**Foliage:** A fast growing glossy-leaved green vegetable with red stems-all of which are edible

**Height:** Can reach 6 feet or more if trained on a trellis, bean pole, lamppost, fence or wall

**Width:** Spreading growth if not contained

**Light:** Full sun

**Water:** Requires consistent moisture to keep from flowering, which causes leaves to turn bitter

**Harvest:** Stem tips harvested 55-70 days after seeding. Repeated harvest of stems and leaves made throughout the season

**Propagation:** By seeds or cuttings, scarify seed; direct seeded 2-3 weeks after all danger of frost has passed. Start indoors 6 weeks before last frost

**Notes:** Native to tropical Asia. Prefers hot weather. A warm season vegetable with a mild flavor and used like spinach in salads, quiches, and cooking. In warm climates where it is not killed by a hard frost, contain growth by pulling up any spreading shoots. It is also used as an ornamental plant for its green leafy vines and small pink flowers. Both birds and deer like this plant. Very easy to grow.