

Latin Name/Genus: *Amaranthus sp.*

Family: *Amaranthaceae*

Difficulty: Easy

Season: Warm season. Amaranth is very much a summer crop.

Exposure: Full sun. Amaranth needs a nice hot summer for its entire growth period of 40-50 days.

Zone: Hardy to Zone 5

Timing: Direct sow in late spring, once overnight temperatures are steadily above 10°C. Optimal soil temperature for germination: 18-24°C.

Starting: Sow seeds 5mm (¼") deep in well drained soil in full sun. Seeds should germinate in 4 to 10 days. Thin seedlings to 25-35cm (10-14") apart in rows 50cm (20") apart.

Days to Maturity: From direct sowing.

Growing: Ideal pH: 6.0-7.5. Keep moist until germinated, and then simply keep the area weeded.

Nutrient Preferences: Appreciates nitrogen for leaf development, as most leafy greens do.

Harvest: Pick baby or mature greens as needed (simply cut them with scissors). The leaves have an appealing, nutty flavour. Seed will ripen in late summer or early fall. Watch for birds visiting the plants. Rub the flower heads between your hands over a bucket or tray. Doing this into paper yard waste bags works well. If the seeds do not fall easily, leave the plants for one more week and try again.

Diseases & Pests: Watch for slug/snail damage to young plants. Amaranth is not prone to pest damage.

Companion Planting: Plant with corn to shade the soil and retain water; attracts predatory ground beetles.

