

# Red Malabar Spinach

*Basella alba var. rubra*

## At a Glance

Height: 6 to 10 feet tall (climbing vine)

Leaf Type: Thick, succulent, deep green leaves with red stems

Days to Maturity: 60-70 days

Best For: Heat-tolerant leafy greens, ornamental edible vine

## Growing Conditions Quick Reference

Soil Temperature: 70-85F for best germination

Soil Type: Well-drained, rich soil with organic matter

Light Requirements: Full sun

Planting Depth: 1/4 inch deep

Seeding Rate: Sow 2-3 seeds per hole, thin to strongest seedling

Plant Spacing: 12-18 inches apart

Moisture Needs: Moderate; keep soil evenly moist

Average Germination Time: 10-21 days (soak seeds overnight to improve germination)

## How to Grow

When to Plant: Direct sow after soil is warm or start indoors 6 weeks before last frost.

Location: Full sun with trellis or support for climbing.

Spacing: Thin seedlings to 12-18 inches apart.

Watering: Keep soil evenly moist during growth.

Fertilizer: Light feeding with compost or balanced fertilizer mid-season.

## Tips for Success

Soak seeds overnight to improve germination.

Provide sturdy vertical support for climbing vines.

Harvest leaves frequently to encourage new growth.

Prefers hot, humid conditions-perfect for summer greens.

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## Fun Fact

Red Malabar Spinach is not a true spinach but a tropical vine that thrives in heat when regular spinach struggles.

## Companion Planting

Pairs well with peppers and eggplants, which also love heat. Avoid overcrowding with other vigorous vines.

## Harvesting and Use

Pick young leaves and tender shoots for salads or cooking. Leaves have a mild, slightly mucilaginous texture when cooked.

## Quick Planting Checklist

- Soak seeds before planting
- Sow after soil is warm
- Provide trellis for climbing
- Harvest leaves regularly