



GROWING AMARANTH

Amaranth is a fantastic addition to any cutting garden, producing tall blooms of striking plumes that look fantastic fresh or dried in a bouquet or arrangement. It's easy to grow and produces an abundance of stems that pair fantastically with dahlias, sunflowers and rudbeckias. Standing up to 120cm tall, it's also an edible plant with leaves that can be cooked like spinach and seeds which can be used as a gluten-free flour or cooked as a nutritious grain.

Seed Sowing

Surface sow the tiny seeds into a seed tray undercover in March, pricking out into modules or pots when large enough to handle.

Transplanting

Transplant outside in May once danger of frost has passed, spacing plants 50cm apart. Alternatively direct sow in May into weed free, well prepared soil, sowing into shallow drills 50cm apart. Thin to 50cm in the row once seeds have germinated. Amaranth can also be grown in containers.

Plant Care

Amaranth thrive in hot and humid conditions and may grow better undercover in a polytunnel or greenhouse. Keep the area weed-free and watered during hot spells. You can mulch around the plants to keep in moisture and prevent weeds. Deadhead to prolong flowering. Stems may need support, especially in windy growing conditions.

Challenges

Amaranth are generally easy to grow and free from most pests and diseases.

Harvest

Pinch out the central stem to encourage lower branching stems of a more workable length. Pick the flowers often to encourage more flowers to form.

Ideally harvest the flowers in the morning when temperatures are low and plant water content is

high. Plants will arrange better if left to sit in water for a few hours after cutting. Amaranth have a very long vase life of up to two weeks.

To dry, cut stems and remove lower leaves and hang upside down in bunches in a cool, dark and well ventilated space.

Culinary Ideas And Uses

Amaranth is a protein-rich, gluten free pseudo-grain similar to quinoa and can be cooked in a similar way.

The leaves can be harvested and used in recipes just like spinach.

Seed Saving

Harvest the individual seed heads as they dry and lay out in a single layer on a sheet to dry further. Thresh by hand or foot to release the seeds and winnow to separate the chaff.

Store in a cool dark place.