

FGCU Food Forest

Plant Database

Okinawa Spinach (*Gynura crepioides*)

Quick Facts

Origin: Indonesia; Southeast Asia.

Description: Small herbaceous running herb to short shrub; evergreen leaves with purple undersides.

Uses: Food; leaves and tender shoots are eaten raw or cooked.

Harvest: Year-round.

Flower: Orange; rare. Cultivated forms are sterile and are planted from cuttings.

Fruit: None.

Tolerance: Full sun to full shade; moderately drought-tolerant.



General Description: Okinawa Spinach, also known as Hung tsoi, is a spinach native to Southeast Asia, specifically Indonesia. It spreads quickly in warm climates, and can be eaten raw or cooked. The leaves and tender shoots have a mucilaginous flavor, especially when cooked, but only the older leaves should be cooked. Cultivated forms are sterile and are planted from cuttings. Okinawa Spinach thrives in Southwest Florida.

- **Native Origin:** Indonesia; Southeast Asia.
- **General History:** Okinawa Spinach is native to Southeast Asia, specifically Indonesia, and is cultivated for its leaves and tender shoots in many climate zones all around the world.
- **Distribution:** Tropics and subtropics; grown as summer annual in colder climates.
- **Season of Harvest:** Mostly year-round in tropics and subtropics; annual in colder climates.
- **Culinary Uses:** The leaves and shoots can be eaten raw or cooked. Okinawa Spinach has a mucilaginous flavor when cooked, however, and usually only older leaves should be cooked.

Okinawa Spinach
Scientific Classification

Kingdom:	Plantae
(unranked):	Angiosperms
(unranked):	Eudicots
(unranked):	Asterids
Order:	Asterales
Family:	Asteraceae
Tribe:	Senecioneae
Genus:	<i>Gynura</i>
Species:	<i>G. crepioides</i>

Sources

Toensmeier, Eric. *Perennial Vegetables*. White River Junction, Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing Company, 2007. Print. Pages 97-98.

<http://growerjim.blogspot.com/2011/05/okinawa-spinach-gynura-crepioides.html>

<http://edibleplantproject.org/okinawaspinach/>

http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/sustainag/extn_pub/veggie%20pubs/Okinawan%20Spinach,%20Gynura,%20Hung-Tsoi,%20Red%20Vegetable.pdf

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