

FGCU Food Forest

Plant Database

Malabar Spinach (*Basella alba*)

Quick Facts

Origin: India to New Guinea, Asia.

Description: Malabar Spinach, also known as Ceylon Spinach, is a fast-growing perennial vine that features heart-shaped, semi-succulent edible leaves. It can grow up to 12 ft. tall.

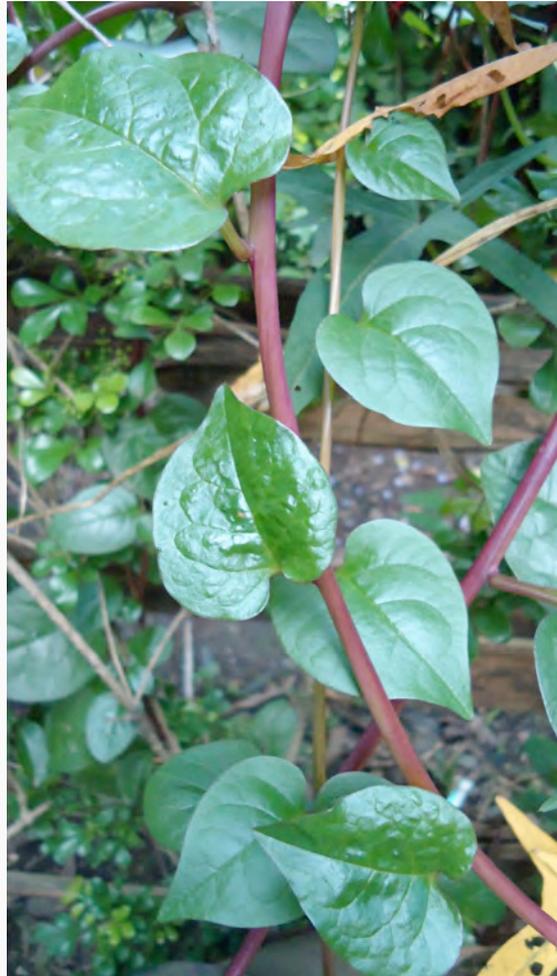
Uses: Food and medicine.

Harvest: Year-round. More productive during summer months.

Flower: Summer months. Flowers are small and unimpressive.

Fruit: Summer months. Fruits are black and contain seeds.

Tolerance: Moderate to low drought tolerance and moderate to low cold tolerance. Prefers full sun to part shade. High tolerance for a wide variety of soil conditions. Prefers moist, well-drained soil.



General Description: Malabar Spinach, also known as Indian or Ceylon Spinach, is a fast-growing perennial vine native to Asia. It features edible heart-shaped leaves with a mild, mucilaginous flavor. The FGCU Food Forest features the cultivar 'Rubra', which has reddish-purple stems. Malabar Spinach can grow up to 12 ft. tall.

- **Native Origin:** Asia; native from India to New Guinea. Naturalized in China, tropical Africa, and parts of South America. Commonly found in home gardens in Florida, USA.
- **General History:** Malabar Spinach has been widely used as food and medicine throughout Asia for centuries. The leaves are popular in many different cuisines throughout India and Southeast Asia. Malabar Spinach is also naturalized in many parts of South America and Africa. Malabar Spinach can be found in home gardens throughout south and central Florida.
- **Distribution:** Tropics and subtropics worldwide.

- **Season of Harvest:** Year-round in the tropics.
- **Culinary Uses:** The leaves and stem tips are usually cooked before eaten, although they are edible raw. Malabar Spinach leaves feature high amounts of protein, vitamins, and iron. It is usually used to thicken soups or is included in stir-fries. A Filipino dish called Utan features Malabar Spinach served over rice. Indians typically include Malabar Spinach in curries. Roots can be used medicinally to treat diarrhea.

Malabar Spinach	
Scientific Classification	
Kingdom:	Plantae
(unranked):	Eudicots
Order:	Caryophyllales
Family:	Basellaceae
Genus:	<i>Basella</i>
Species:	<i>B. alba</i>

Sources

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basella_alba

<http://davesgarden.com/guides/pf/go/1318/>

<http://www.pfaf.org/user/Plant.aspx?LatinName=Basella+alba>

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/mv138>

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https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/c/c6/Basella_rubra.jpg/170px-Basella_rubra.jpg

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