



Amaranth



Did You Know?

Some estimate that amaranth was domesticated between 6000 and 8000 years ago. A staple crop for the Aztecs, both the leaves and grain were used for food, and it was also incorporated into religious services.



As the story goes, the Spanish conquistadors outlawed the cultivation of amaranth during their attempts to convert the Aztecs to Christianity. Despite those laws, amaranth as a crop not only survived, but is currently grown and utilized all over the world.

Amaranth is a tall, bushy plant with edible leaves and brightly colored flowers. It is not a “true” cereal grain, but has a similar nutritional profile to other grains, with several additional benefits.

Why amaranth?

- Amaranth is a good source of protein, and high in the amino acid lysine, which is many times low in grains.
- ½ cup of cooked amaranth provides about 125 calories, 5 grams of protein, and 3 grams of fiber.
- It is a good source of calcium, magnesium, iron, phosphorus, and potassium.
- It has potential to help decrease cholesterol.

Helpful Cooking Tips

Amaranth can be cooked in water like rice, but it releases a lot of starch. The result is a thick, porridge-like texture. It can be cooked with a lot of excess water, or mixed with other grains (rice, quinoa, millet, etc.) if a more “rice-like” consistency is preferred.

Try adding it to breads, muffins, or as a whole-grain thickener for soups. It can also be heated in a skillet and popped like popcorn!



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