



## PLANT FACT SHEET

# *Lablab purpureus* (L.) Sweet

GENUS *Lablab* FAMILY Fabaceae

COMMON NAMES Lablab bean

## EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

**Edible parts:** Leaves, Fruit, Pods, Seeds, Root, Flowers, Vegetable

The young pods, ripe seeds and young leaves are edible, cooked.

Flowers can be eaten raw, steamed or added to soups and stews.

Dried seeds can be cooked as a vegetable.

The seeds can also be sprouted then crushed and cooked.

The large starchy root is edible.

CAUTION Many types can be poisonous. They should be boiled and the cooking water thrown away.

## DESCRIPTION

A climbing bean which can have vines 1-5 m long. It keeps growing from year to year. The stems can be smooth or hairy. Leaves are made up of 3 almost triangular leaflets. The leaflets are 5-15 cm long and 3-14 cm wide. The side leaflets are somewhat asymmetrical. Often the plants are flushed purple. The flowering clusters are 5-20 cm long. Flowers are often white but can vary from red to blue. The pods are flattened, pointed and up to 12 cm long and 2 cm wide. They can be green, purple or white. Inside there are 3-5 white or dark seeds. Seed pods have a wavy margin. The seeds are 0.5-1.5 cm long. (This bean is similar to Lima bean but the keel of the flower is not spirally twisted, the pod ends more bluntly with a long thin style at the end and the hilum on the seed is longer.)

## HABITAT

It is a tropical and subtropical plant. It mostly grows between 750 and 2175 m altitude in the tropics. It is drought resistant and can grow in quite low rainfall areas. Some varieties are short day and some are long day kinds. In Nepal it grows to about 2500 m altitude. It suits hardiness zones 9-12. In Yunnan.

## PRODUCTION

### Cultivation

Seeds are sown at 30 x 60 cm spacing near stakes or trees. About 20 kg of seed per hectare are required. Fertilising with nitrogen and potash until flowering is recommended. Young pods are ready 4-6 months after planting and seeds 6-8 months. Pods are often harvested over 2 or 3 years. Pollination and seed setting are reduced in cold weather.

## Harvesting and Seed Production

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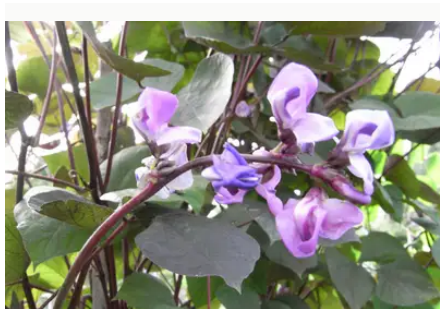
## NOTES

There is only one Lablab species. Also as Papilionaceae.

## PICTURES



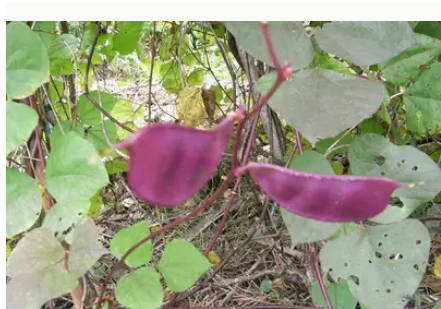
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