PLANT FACT SHEET

Spinacia oleracea L.

GENUS *Spinacia* **FAMILY** Amaranthaceae

COMMON NAMES Spinach

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Seeds sprouts, Vegetable

Leaves are cooked in a small amount of water. They are also used in soups and salads.
Young leaves are eaten raw and older leaves are cooked. The leaves are used for sarma in Turkey. They are rolled around a filling of rice or minced meat.
The sprouted seeds can be used in salads.
CAUTION: Spinach can contain oxalates which affects calcium absorption.

DESCRIPTION

An annual leafy vegetable. It grows 60-90 cm high and spreads 30-45 cm wide. The broad leaves are produced in a clump on short stalks. The leaves at the base are large and leaves on the stalk are smaller. Plants are separately male and female. (So both types are needed if seed is to be produced.) Flowers are greenish in spikes.

HABITAT

It is a temperate plant. It does not suit the tropical lowlands and grows best where the temperature varies between 10°C and 20°C or above 2000 m altitude. The kind with very prickly seeds is frost resistant. Plants need a deep well drained soil. It is a cool season, short day plant. In Nepal it grows to about 1400 m altitude. It suits hardiness zones 6-9.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It is normally sown directly by seeds. Plants need to be 25 cm apart.

Harvesting and Seed Production

The older leaves are picked off. They can be harvested starting at 8 weeks.

NOTES

There are 3 Spinacia species. They are native to central Asia.
Also put in the family Chenopodiaceae.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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