

Tropical Spinaches

- There are many and they go by many names – feature strongly in diets throughout Asia
- Not the same family as English spinach but can be used in same way
- Great for our warm and wet summers
- Can be eaten raw but might be best consumed cooked if kidney stones an issue
- Highly nutritious
- Perennials (die back in summer)
- Many make good groundcover
- Hardy, few pests/diseases
- Source – other gardeners, Blue House Yandina

Malabar (also known as Ceylon) Spinach

Small amount of shade

Seeds or cuttings

Garden or pot

Needs a trellis

Less slimy in texture than others

Vit A and C, calcium, iron
phytochemicals,
vitamin A, iron,
magnesium



Okinawa spinach

Cuttings

Full sun/ partial shade

Yellow flowers but no seeds (cut flowers off to focus on leaf production)

Harvesting (leaves) increases production

Protein, iron, potassium, calcium, Vitamin A



Surinam Spinach

Garden or pot

Up to 1m

Cuttings

Pink flowers

Leaves stems and flowers used raw

Leaves, stems and flowers and roots cooked

Self sows rapidly (can become invasive)

Vitamin C, vitamin E, Omega -3 fatty acids, iron, calcium, magnesium, soluble fibres (pectin), potassium, β -carotene, proteins and dietary fibre.



Sambung (longevity) spinach

Part shade/moist soil

Cuttings

Yellow-orange thistle like flowers

Eat young leaves and shoots – raw
or cooked (blanched, steamed, stir
fry, soups)

Make herbal tea

Anti microbial, anti inflammatory,
anti oxidant, anti cancer, anti-
hypertensive and cardioprotective,
anti hyperglycemic, fertility
enhancement (Lit Review Frontiers
in Pharmacology 2016)

Vitamins A, B1, B2, B3, B6, B9, C, E,
K, as well as calcium, iron,
phosphorus, and potassium



Oxalates (oxalic acid)

- Found in many plants, less in tropical spinaches than English spinach
- High oxalate diet may lead to kidney stones
- Oxalates are water soluble so reduced by more than half with cooking - blanching, steaming, boiling (discard water) – loss of nutrients???
- Not microwave or stir-fry as oxalates still intact
- To freeze blanche first
- Alternatively drink more water and get enough calcium in diet (can help decrease the absorption of oxalate in your body, which is thought to prevent kidney stones from forming)