



Urban Harvest

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Growing Spinach in the Houston Area

Ray Sher

I always thought the only kind of spinach that we could easily grow in the Houston metro area was Malabar vine spinach, which does quite well and produces an abundance of thick shiny leaves. It can be eaten fresh in salads when small or steamed or sautéed when the leaves are larger. After talking with a people who were having success growing standard rosette spinach, I decided to test a few.

I purchased seed for eight varieties, and decided to plant the seed at different times during the month of September to test germination. I got good germination throughout the entire planting period. The only problem was a cat that kept digging up the young plants. All varieties that I tested produced good tasting productive plants, and I recommend them.

I harvested by taking a few of the outer leaves at a time, and this resulted in continued production of more leaves. By planting several varieties with different maturity and bolt resistance, I was able to harvest spinach all winter and into the late spring. All the plants were hybrid with the exception of Steadfast and Bloomsdale, which were open pollinated. And to my surprise, when grown in raised beds, the leaves were not dirty as they often are in grocery stores. Here is what I found.

Bloomsdale, from Territorial Seed, matured in 50 days. The plants produced thick, succulent, dark-green, savored leaves that were very sweet. It is not as bolt resistant as other varieties. Hector matured in 37 days. It is a small plant with very tender tasting dark green leaves and a deliciously mild flavor. Get it from Johnny's Selected Seeds.

Olympia, from Territorial Seed, matured in 45 days. It was productive, smooth leaved spinach. The dark green leaves were about 6" to 8" long, pointed, and on long stems producing a 10" to 12" tall rosette. I got abundant production on this slow to bolt plant. It has very good eating quality.

Oriental Giant matured in 40 days. The very large upright plant of 10" long arrow-shaped smooth leaves produced large quantities of very good tasting spinach. Get it from Territorial Seed.

Space matured in 39 days. It produced quantities of large, slightly crinkled deep-green leaves with an upright growth. Get it from Johnny's Selected Seeds.

Spinner matured in 38 days. This upright small plant of triangular, crinkled flavorful leaves produces high yields. Get it from Johnny's Selected Seeds.

Steadfast matured in 50 days. It was not as productive as some of the others, but was very bolt resistant and has excellent taste. It is a small plant, with beautiful, smooth, dark green leaves. Get it from Territorial Seed.

Tyee matured in 42 days. There is a vigorous growth of savored leaves with an upright growth pattern, and it was very slow to bolt. Get it from Johnny's Selected Seeds.

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