
More about Grain Amaranth

Correction: Page one of the article on amaranth in issue 91 of EDN (column 2, second full paragraph) includes a statement about the "Incas in Mexico." That should read, "Aztecs in Mexico."

Jacob Alemu sent a few comments and corrections regarding the amaranth article in EDN 91. Unfortunately, the comments were received after that issue went to print. Please note the following:

* The correct word for "Weed" in Kikuyu is "Riya" not "terere", as it is indicated in the article. Terere is a typical name for a traditional vegetable, which in our case is vegetable amaranth. In Kiswahili, weed is "Kwekwe."

* From my two years' experience, I see amaranth as a [relatively] high feeder, in terms of rain/water and manure. I have a problem when we say amaranth is an extremely drought tolerant crop.

* What do you mean by mixing amaranth seed with "ground corn" during planting? Here in Kenya, we mix the seeds for planting either with soil or sand or well composted manure. [Ed: Using corn that has been ground into meal would be similar to using these substances.]

* Two Kenyan farmers (about 200 km apart) began feeding their dairy cows and chickens amaranth stalks and cooked amaranth grains. The cows' milk production went up, and the chickens started laying more eggs with strong shells and very yellow yolks.

* Dr. Tagwira, of African University in Zimbabwe, says that after he began feeding amaranth stalks to his female goats they started giving birth to twins and triplets. Before he had one and now he has 50 of them. * Some of the people who use amaranth in their diet claim to have added weight. This is not fun for some of them, because they don't want to add weight. [Dick Dugger also shared that when he asked a group about any negatives they might have to discuss regarding amaranth, "One lady said she had a friend who loved amaranth and she ate too much of it. She said the friend gained much weight with her overeating." Dick added, "I don't really see this as a negative but just an example of the nutritional value coming out of malnutrition."]

* Some of the amaranth users who are diabetic and suffer from ulcer problems say they feel much better whenever they take amaranth in porridge form.

Jacob concluded, "This is some of the feedback I get from the people with whom I interact as I promote amaranth among the Kenyan society. Everyday, I hear and learn new things from the people."

Larry Yarger (ECHO staff member) shared that Johnny's Selected Seeds and Seeds of Change sell amaranth seed. Johnny's Selected Seeds sells *Amaranthus caudatus* and *A. tricolor*. Seeds of Change also sells those two, plus *A. cruentus* and *A. hypochondriacus*.

Cite as:

ECHO Staff 2006. More about Grain Amaranth. *ECHO Development Notes* no. 92

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