

Good King Henry

Chenopodium bonus-henrius – Perennial

Looks like a perennial spinach but is from a different genus. Delicious leaves are good fresh or lightly steamed. The spring shoots harvest lasts up to three months, much longer than asparagus. If harvesting spring shoots, let the first 2–3 grow to maturity to encourage plant root growth and then harvest the subsequent shoots. Rich in vitamins C and A and calcium. Seeds are edible as a grain crop similar to Chenopodiums like Quinoa. Also known as Lincolnshire spinach and fat hen plant. Old European vegetable primarily grown for its edible asparagus-type shoots. Until the 1900s, Good King Henry was commonly grown in English kitchen gardens.

How to grow Good King Henry from seed, division

Good King Henry seed is notoriously difficult to germinate. We went through several batches, stratification methods until we cracked the code. For Zone 7b direct sow in the garden in mid-December. Try multiple direct seeding dates. If starting indoors, stratify in a 5–6" deep undivided flat outdoors for 12 weeks beginning in mid January, then bring indoors to germinate. The key is fresh seed. Unlike many other seeds, viable Good King Henry seeds float. Do not divide until after the third established year in the ground. Early plants have one tap root.

Soil pH 5.6–7.8.
Hardiness zones 3–9.
Usual seed life: 5 years
Planting Depth 1/4"
Soil Temp. Germ. 60° F stratify
Days to Germ. 70–80
Plant Spacing 12–18"
Row Spacing 24"
Days To Maturity 300
Part Shade
Moist Well Drained

