virginia home food production

SPINACH

DEPARTMENT OF HORTICULTURE

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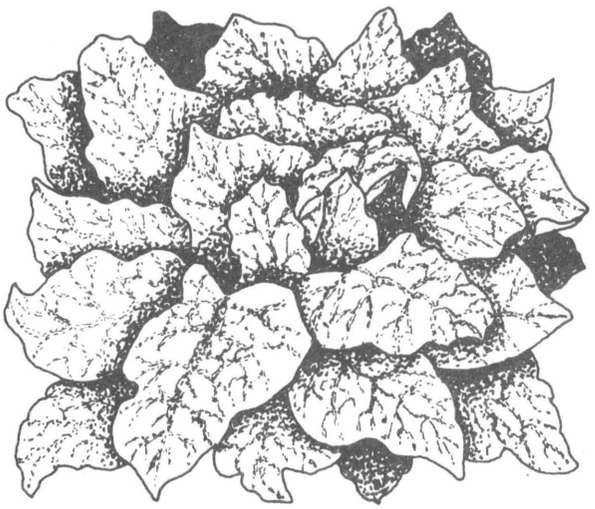
MH 435



ENVIRONMENTAL PREFERENCES

LIGHT: tolerates part shade

SOIL: well-drained loam, high organic matter

FERTILITY: medium
pH: 6.0-7.5

TEMPERATURE: cool (60-65°F)

MOISTURE: moist, but not water logged

CULTURE

PLANTING: sow seeds ½" deep in early spring as soon as soil can be tilled and in late summer for fall and early winter harvest

SPACING: 2-4" x 12-18"

HARDINESS: hardy annual

FERTILIZER NEEDS. medium-heavy feeder, before seeding broadcast 3-4 lbs. 10-10-10 per 50 feet of row, mix thoroughly with soil.

CULTURAL PRACTICES: Spinach is a cool season vegetable and should be grown in the spring or fall. Long days and high temperatures cause the plants to bolt. There are spring and fall varieties of spinach. Spring varieties tend to be slower to bolt than fall varieties.

Because spinach is shallow rooted, it does not compete well with weeds. Deep cultivation will destroy spinach roots and should not be used.

An adequate supply of water is very important for good production, but water logged soil will also decrease production.

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COMMON PROBLEMS

DISEASES: downy mildew, yellows, blight

INSECTS: aphids, leaf miners, cabbage worms

CULTURAL: early development of flower stalks (seeds were sown too late in the spring, hot weather induced bolting)

NUTRITIONAL VALUE

1 cup cooked, drained spinach

Grams	Calories
180	40

% U.S. RDA

Vitamin A	Vitamin C	Calcium
290	80	15

Riboflavin	Iron
15	20

HARVESTING AND STORAGE

DAYS TO MATURITY: 40-70 days from seed

HARVEST: Spinach may be harvested from the time the plant has 6-8 leaves until just before the seed stalk develops. The entire plant should be cut off just above the ground. Leaves can also be harvested individually. The outer leaves should be pinched and not pulled off.

APPROXIMATE YIELDS: (per 10 feet of row) 4-6 lbs.

AMOUNT TO RAISE PER PERSON: 10 lbs.

STORAGE: COLD ($32^{o}F$), moist (95% RH) conditions 10-14 days

PRESERVATION: freeze, can

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