

***Amaranthus cruentus* L.**

Red Amaranth

(*Amaranthus chlorostachys*, *Amaranthus hybridus* subsp. *cruentus*,
Amaranthus paniculatus)

- This Central American species is alternately known Achita, African Spinach, Bledo, Blood Amaranth, Bush Greens, Caterpillar Amaranth, Princess Feather; Purple Amaranth, Red Shank, or Sudan Spinach; the moderately coarse textured plants typically mature at 3' to 5' (6') with a spread of about a quarter to third of the height; leaves vary in color from yellow-green, medium green, dark green, to bronzish green depending upon the cultivar and nutritional status; leaves are simple, narrowly to broadly ovate; bases are acute to cuneate with tips acute to acuminate and with wavy margins; the erect flower panicles are 4" to 8" long and fairly dense, varying from creamy white to blood red in color depending upon the cultivar and mature in late spring to summer depending on sowing times and regional conditions.
- While this species is grown for agronomic purposes in many regions of the world, ornamental cultivars are selected for the showy flower and fruit panicles; primary uses are as tall bedding plants to add height to island plantings or mixed borders, or for cut flowers; the showy panicles can be very striking as cut flowers and are long lasting features as individual panicles go in the garden; after the initial flowering, plants can be deadheaded to encourage return bloom with mixed success.
- The most popular of these taxa is 'Autumn Palette' which offers a of long showy panicles in autumn colors ranging from creamy white, buff, peach, deep apricot, to orange-red; 'Marvel Bronze' has wine-red panicles with darker green leaves that are flushed bronze; while touted as disease and pest resistant in many regions, flea beetles may caused severe damage to the foliage; although this is detrimental to its use as a massing or tall bedding plant, the foliar damage usually occurred late enough in the season that the late spring to summer flowers still matured sufficiently for use in fresh cut or dried arrangements.