

**Botanic Name:** *Amaranthus spinosus* L. -- Sp. Pl. 2: 991. 1753 [1 May 1753] (IK)

**Common Name:** Prickly Amaranth, Spiny Amaranth.

**Family:** Amaranthaceae

**Habitat:** Terrestrial

**Distribution:** Usually native to America but now distributed throughout the warmer states of the world. Abundant near wastelands and cosmopolitan in distribution.

**Description:** Erect glabrous herbs, profusely branched, branches ridged distinctly; spines divaricate, sharp, to 1.2 cm long. Leaves of various shape ovate elliptical, lanceolate, lanceolate-oblong, leaf base attenuate, apex obtuse or subacute; petiolate, petiole 1cm to 4 cm long. Flowers in terminal panicles, spikes or in axillary, sessile clusters. Bracteate, bract minute, ovate-lanceolate in shape. Male flowers: 1-2 mm across; tepals 5, calycine, unequal, ovate-lanceolate; stamens 5; anthers sagittate. Female flowers: 1-2 mm across; tepals 5, oblong, acute at apex; ovary 1-celled; ovules solitary; stigmas 2-3. Seeds minute, discoid.

**Phytochemicals:** Alkaloids, flavonoids, tannins, saponins glycosides,  $\beta$ - cyanins, antioxidant, carotenoids,  $\alpha$ - amylase

**Medicinal/Economic uses:** The seed is used as a poultice for broken bones. The plant is astringent, diaphoretic, diuretic, emollient, febrifuge, galactagogue, and toothache. It is a great relief to stop internal bleeding and pain in menstruation. Externally, it can be used to treat ulcerated mouths, vaginal discharges, nose bleeds and a range of skin problems including wounds, eczema, boils and burns. The plant can be used fresh or it can also be harvested when coming into flower and dried for later use. The ash of the plant, combined with water, is used to wash sores. The sap is used as an eye wash to treat ophthalmic and convulsions in children. The juice of the root is used in Nepal to treat fevers, urinary troubles, diarrhoea and dysentery. Also used to treat indigestion and vomiting that occur after eating unusual foods. It helps to remove pus from boils. Plants is used as a tenderizer in cooking tough vegetables such as cowpea leaves and pigeon peas.