American Groundnut

Apios americana



American Groundnut
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 8 feet

Spread: 24 inches

Sunlight:

Hardiness Zone: 4

Other Names: Potato Bean

Description:

A perennial climber that features beautiful racemes of interesting red-brown flowers, giving way to edible 3" long bean shaped fruit; large, potato-like tubers develop underground and can be used in stews, soups or fried as chips

Edible Qualities

American Groundnut is a perennial vegetable plant that is commonly grown for its edible qualities. It produces brown oval tubers with white flesh which are typically harvested when mature. The tubers have a pleasant taste and a firm texture.

The tubers are most often used in the following ways:

- Cooking

Planting & Growing

American Groundnut will grow to be about 8 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 24 inches. As a climbing vine, it should be planted next to a fence, trellis or other rigid structure where it can be trained to grow upwards on it. Because of its vigorous growth habit, it may require staking or supplemental support. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 5 years. As an herbaceous perennial, this plant will usually die back to the crown each winter, and will regrow from the base each spring. Be careful not to disturb the crown in late winter when it may not be readily seen!

This plant is typically grown in a designated vegetable garden. It does best in full sun to partial shade. It does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is quite intolerant of urban pollution, therefore inner city or urban streetside plantings are best avoided. This species is native to parts of North America. It can be propagated by division.

American Groundnut is a good choice for the vegetable garden, but it is also well-suited for use in outdoor pots and containers. Because of its spreading habit of growth, it is ideally suited for use as a 'spiller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the edges where it can spill gracefully over the pot. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.