

*Basella alba*

[Synonyms : *Basella cordifolia*, *Basella rubra*, *Gandola alba*, *Gandola rubra*]

**VINE SPINACH** is a climbing, twining vine. Native to tropical Asia it has tiny, reddish or whitish flowers.

It is also known as *Alugbati* (Filipino/Tagalog), *Baccali* (Telugu), *Bacela* (Portuguese), *Basella*, *Baselle* (French), *Baselle blanche* (French), *Bassella bianca* (Italian), *Bastron blanc* (Creole), *Batstsali* (Telugu), *Bologi* (Sierra Leonean), *Brède d'Angola* (French), *Ceylon spinach*, *Ceylonspinazie* (Dutch), *Country spinach*, *East Indian spinach*, *Épinard de Malabar* (French), *Espinaca basela* (Spanish), *Espinaca blanca de Malabar* (Spanish), *Espinaca de la China* (Spanish), *Espinaca de Malabar* (Spanish), *Gandola* (Sundanese), *Gendola* (Indonesian, Malay), *Indian saag*, *Indian spinach*, *Indischer Spinat* (German), *Indisk spenat* (Swedish), *Indisk spinat* (Danish), *Jingga* (Javanese), *Kandula* (Indonesian), *Libáto* (Filipino/Tagalog), *Lü loo kui* (Chinese), *Malabâr* (Arabic), *Malabarin pinaatti* (Finnish), *Malabar nightshade*, *Malabarspenat* (Swedish), *Malabar spinach*, *Malabarspinat* (Danish, German), *Malabar spinazie* (Dutch), *Mông toi* (Vietnamese), *Mu er cai* (Chinese), *Murerema* (Kikuyu), *Niviti* (Sinhalese), *Oostindische spinazie* (Dutch), *Pak prang* (Thai), *Pasali* (Tamil), *Pazu* (Turkish), *Phak plang* (Thai), *Poi* (Hindi), *Poi-mopal* (Gujarati), *Poi saag* (Nepalese), *Remayong* (Malay), *Saag* (Hindi), *Slippery vegetable*, *Spinacio della Cina* (Italian), *Surinam spinach*, *Vaslak-kirai* (Tamil), and *Weisse Beerblume* (German).

*Alba* means 'white'.

The leaves (especially the green or purple cultivated varieties) are eaten as an alternative to spinach (*Spinacia oleracea*) and young leaves can provide a salad vegetable. In Asia they are often added to soups and stews.

The red sap has been used in China as a colouring medium, not only in official seals but also as cosmetic rouge – and edible red juice from the berry-like fruit is also used as a food colouring.

Medicinally, in Kenya, an infusion of leaves is used to regulate women's periods. Locally in India and Malaysia leaf poultices have been applied to sores. Vine spinach has also been used in Asia as a laxative for children, and the fruit juice has been applied in Java (now an Indonesian island) as a treatment for conjunctivitis.