

*Lablab purpureus*

[Synonyms : *Dolichos benghalensis*, *Dolichos lablab*, *Dolichos lignosus*, *Dolichos niger*, *Dolichos purpureus*, *Dolichos sondanensis*, *Lablab cultratus*, *Lablab lablab*, *Lablab niger*, *Lablab vulgaris*, *Vigna aristata*]

**HYACINTH BEAN** is a deciduous, twining and climbing or trailing vine. Probably native to tropical Africa it has small pea-like, fragrant, white to purple flowers.

It is also known as Australian pea, Australian pea vine, *Bátau* (Filipino/Tagalog), *Bonavis* (West Indian), Bonavista bean, *Boucousou* (West Indian), *Đâu ván* (Vietnamese), *Dolichos*, *Dolichos bean*, *Dolique lab-lab* (French), Egyptian bean, Egyptian kidney bean, Field bean, Fiwi bean, *Frijol de adorno* (Salvadoran), *Gallinita* (Mexican), *Helmbohne* (German), *Ho-dhambala* (Singhalese), Indian bean, Indian butter bean, *Irivija* (Singhalese), Jack bean, *Kacang kara* (Malay), *Kachang jeriji* (Sundanese), *Kekara* (Javanese), *Lablab*, *Lablab bean*, *Lubia* (Arabic), *Lubia bean*, *Motchai* (Tamil), *Njahi* (Kikuyu), *Papapa* (Hawaiian), Poor man's bean, *Poroto de Egipto* (Argentine), Purple hyacinth bean, *Quiquaqua* (Venezuelan), *Sem* (Hindi), Seim bean, Tonga bean, and *Tua nang* (Thai).

Warning – the raw seeds can be toxic – with a poison that can be destroyed by boiling.

*Purpureus* is Latin (purple-coloured).

Both the young leaves and beans have been eaten as a fresh vegetable in India for thousands of years. Today they are still eaten there and in west Africa and Malaysia too – and they are also grown for food in large quantities in Egypt and the Sudan.

This plant has long been cultivated in Asia (particularly India) for both green manure, forage and fodder.

In Kenya baked seeds are used in veterinary medicine for treating lung disease in sheep.

Medicinally, the leaves have been used in Malaysia in poultices for treating some skin disorders, and in some parts of Asia the leaf juice has been used to ease ear ache and treat ear and throat inflammation.