



# GTCG WEEKLY

## Recipes, Garden Pests and TidBits

Newsletter

Issue #2

### Amaranth/Pigweed

[Scientific name: *Amaranthus Retroflexus* |

#### GROWTH

Pigweed, also known as Amaranth, is generally used as the common name for closely related summer annuals that have a rapport for being the major weeds of vegetable and row crops in North America. These weeds thrive in hot weather, can tolerate drought, respond highly to nutrients in the soil and can adapt to avoid shading. This puts them in competition with warm-season vegetables. Most pigweeds can grow into large, erect-to-bushy plants anywhere from 2 to 7 feet high. There are over 60 different species of pigweed.

#### DISEASES/PESTS

Pigweed/Amaranth flea beetles are common pests of these weeds. They have red and black heads with yellow lines on their black back. Due to pigweeds' presence among warm-season crops in North America, it is common for these pests to harm other crops as well. For management, planting late in the season can help avoid these beetles, and removing dead crop matter can prevent their feeding and housing.



#### HISTORY

Pigweed was considered by the Aztecs as a vital grain and was used in a variety of ways. Despite its Latin American roots, pigweed received its name from being used as fodder for pigs and is typically regarded as an invasive weed.



#### PRESERVATION

Freezing pigweed is one way to preserve the weed for safe and future consumption. To preserve, follow these methods:

1. Harvest: Pick when they are young and soak in cool water for two minutes and rinse away remaining dirt.
2. Blanch: Place the plant in boiling water until it changes to a deep green color and the leaves become limp. Remove from the pot of water, drain and cool in your refrigerator.
3. Freeze: When cooled, place in the freezer. Pack in small, shallow bags for up to one year.

## Recipe of the Week

# Pigweed, Spinach and Fruit Smoothie



Prep Time: 5-10 minutes  
Servings: 1 (8-ounce) serving

### INGREDIENTS

1 cup orange juice  
1/2 cup pigweed, cooked in boiling water  
1/2 cup spinach  
1/2 apple  
1 cup strawberries  
1 tablespoon honey, to sweeten  
1 tablespoon chia seeds or flax seeds,  
optional

### DIRECTIONS

Add all of the ingredients to a blender and blend until liquid or to desired consistency.

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## CONSUMPTION

Similar to other weeds, pigweed can accumulate nitrates and oxalates which can make ingestion unsafe. It's better to forage for these weeds outside of large crops to avoid toxic levels of nitrates.

You can consume pigweed in a similar way to how you would consume spinach; do not eat Pigweeds raw, but rather cook them in boiling water for 25-30 minutes before consumption.



## NUTRITION

Recipe makes 1 serving. Each serving has 360 calories, 6 grams (g) fat, 7 g protein, 76 g carbohydrate, 12 g fiber and 65 milligrams sodium

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EXTENSION

See [www.ag.ndsu.edu/food](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/food)