

Grow a Garden

sowing, growing and harvesting tips
third edition



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Dear Gardeners,

We are happy to bring you our third edition of a revised compact visual guide to planting and growing a food garden at home. This booklet has been in response to the numerous queries we have received from amateur and experienced gardeners over the years. We have consulted with Malnad master gardeners to gather the information and traditional knowledge for this compilation. You can find here information on

- . when and how to plant your organic, open pollinated seeds and tubers
- . transplanting details
- . harvesting
- . FAQs
- . planting calendar

This booklet covers 38 vegetable, tuber and flower species complete with botanical illustrations. The section on tubers encourages food gardeners to experiment with and grow these resilient but forgotten food crops.

Grow a garden, cultivate a future!

The Vanastree Collective
Sirsi, Karnakata India

Send us your feedback to vanastree@gmail.com

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FAQs

What is hybridization?

Hybridization is the cross pollination of plants, resulting in new varieties.

Natural Hybridization is one of the origins of diversification within species. This stabilizes over several generations giving rise to stable, open pollinated varieties.

Modern Hybridization is the purposeful crossing of plant varieties with desirable qualities evidently in order to “improve” them. It is done by selection of certain traits over several generations. It has become a ploy used by seed companies to ensure proprietary and breeding rights over the varieties developed by them, thus monopolising the market. The process renders future generations of those seeds almost sterile or unusable, since undesirable variations show up. Modern hybrid seeds cannot be saved and re-sown. Farmers and gardeners have to buy fresh seeds from the seed companies year after year, thereby incurring high costs.



What are open-pollinated seeds?

Open-pollinated seeds are traditionally bred seeds, which have been developed by farmers in an open, natural environment. They have been preserved for millennia, and can be saved, sown and reproduced by anyone, thus allowing farmers and gardeners independence from seed companies.

What are organic seeds?

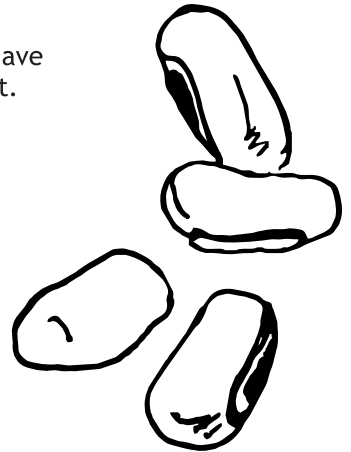
Organic seeds are seeds grown in healthy, living soils built up entirely with natural inputs like compost and mulch. They are produced with absolutely no use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides and are not genetically modified.

What are climbers and shrubs?

Climbers are plants that are vines and need support. Shrubs are plants that grow erect and do not need support.

What does it mean when a plant is 'self seeding'?

Self seeding is when a plant disperses its seeds such that offspring come up in the vicinity of the mother plant. So the seeds need not necessarily be replanted by the gardener. Cosmos is an example of a self seeding plant.



What is transplanting?

Transplantation is a process where a plant is uprooted from one place and planted in another. Small seeds like those of amaranth, brinjal, chilli, capsicum, and tomato are first sown in seed beds/trays and transplanted later. Larger seeds like those of beans, lady's finger, pumpkin, cucumber and gourds can be directly planted. It is important to transplant carefully so the roots are not damaged. This is usually done when 2-4 true leaves appear on the seedling.

What is mulching?

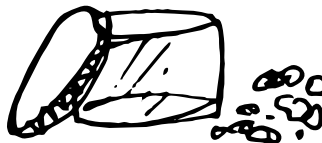
Mulch is a layer of material spread over soil as protection. It helps prevent loss of moisture, prevents weeds from coming up and adds to soil fertility. Mulch could include grass cuttings, hay, coconut/areca husk, leaves, vegetable/fruit peels and other organic material.

How much water do plants need?

Seeds once planted, and seedlings should be watered gently with a watering can. Regular watering is a good rule of thumb so the plant does not droop. Mulching ensures that water is not lost by evaporation. Each plant has its own specific requirement. More watering is required in summer.

How must seeds be stored?

All seeds should be stored in a cool, dry, dark place, preferably in an air-tight container.



Page Map

CROP NAME — **amaranth**

Varieties: red, light green

ಹರಿವೆ
(ha-ree-vay)

LOCAL NAME
(Kannada)

PRONUNCIATION

Amaranthus cruentus
Amaranthus viridis

BOTANICAL NAME



SHADE TOLERANCE
some crops need
full sun while
others can grow
in partial shade

White amaranth
is self seeding.

Plants are
somewhat
drought tolerant
with healthy soil
and mulching.



CROP DRAWING

EXTRA TIPS

Time from
sowing to:

HARVEST

TRANSPLANTATION

GERMINATION

harvest

Only leaves
can be
harvested
several times
allowing for
regrowth

45-60
DAYS (1.5-2 months)

transplantation

15-20
DAYS

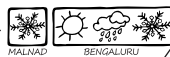
sowing

Sprinkle
in beds

HARVEST DURATION
90-120 DAYS
(3-4 months)

Transplant
in rows 9"
apart when
4-6" tall

Germination
within 8 days



MALNAD

BENGALURU

SOWING SEASON



summer | monsoon | winter

TIME FROM
BEGINNING TO
END OF HARVEST

Vegetables

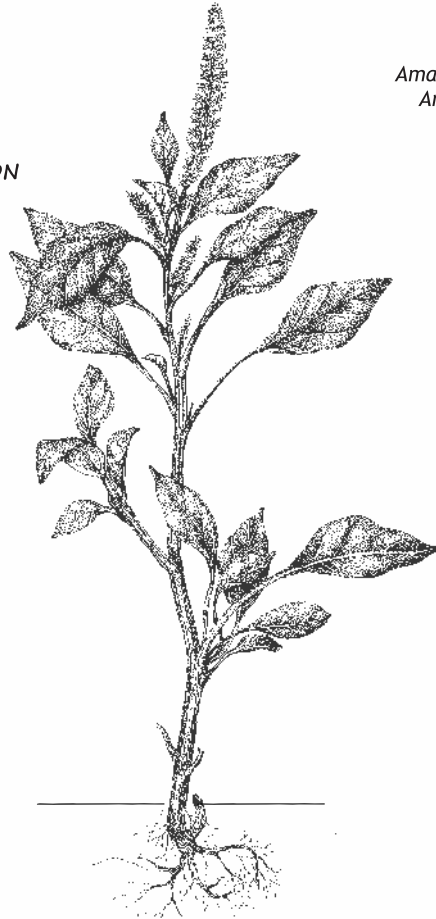
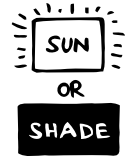
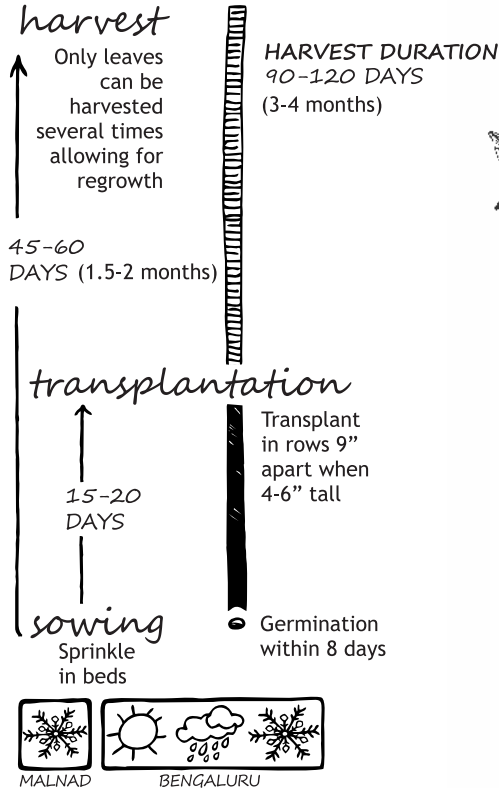
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Lima Bean	14
Winged Bean	15
Hyacinth Bean	16
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amaranth

Varieties: red, light green

ಹರಿವೆ
(ha-ree-vay)

Amaranthus cruentus
Amaranthus viridis



White amaranth is self seeding.

Plants are somewhat drought tolerant with healthy soil and mulching.

30 day bean

ತಿಂಗಳವರೆ

(thing-ala-ava-ray)

Phaseolus vulgaris

harvest



40
DAYS



HARVEST DURATION
30 days

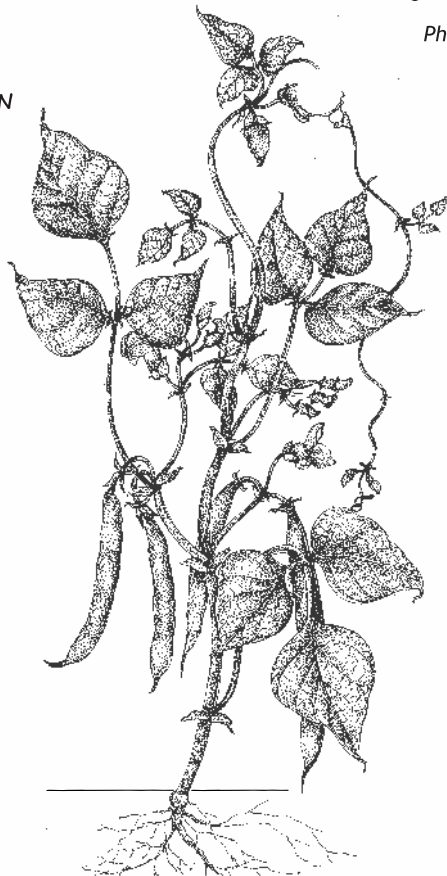
Germination
within 4-5 days

sowing

In rows 1/2" deep,
12" apart.
Stakes needed



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Quick growing,
popular variety.

yard long bean

angikase

ಅಂಗೀಕಸೆ

(ang-ee-ka-say)

Phaseolus vulgaris

harvest

Upto 100
pods per
plant



60
DAYS (2 months)



HARVEST DURATION
180 days
(6 months)

sowing

In rows 3/4" deep,
8" apart.
Stakes needed

Germination
within 7 days



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Old variety.

Will not yield in
heavy rain.

Fairly drought
tolerant if mulched.

lima bean

ಕಿಡ್ನಿ ಅವರೆ

(kid-nee ava-ray)

Phaseolus lunatus

harvest

Upto 100
pods per
plant



150
DAYS (5 months)

HARVEST DURATION
210 days
(7 months)



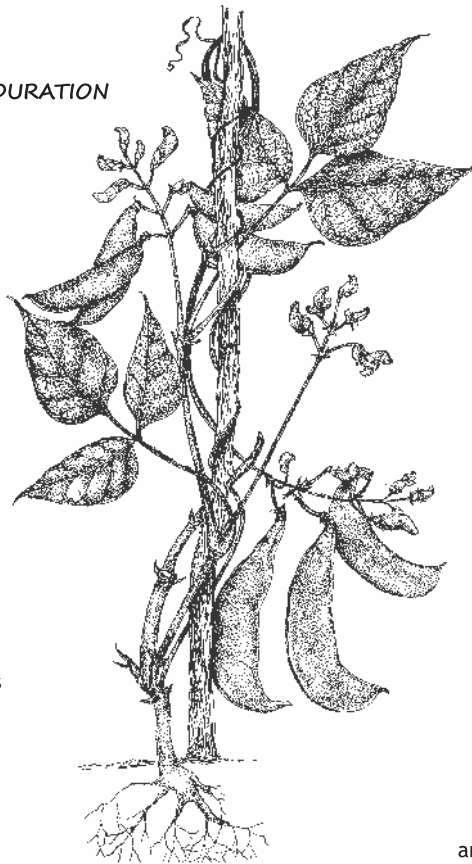
Germination
within 7 days

sowing

Direct sowing.
Grow onto a
trellis or tree



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The plant is
dormant during
the monsoon and
needs pruning.
It will grow again
and yield every
winter for 3-4 years.

The seeds (not pods)
are eaten fresh or dried.

winged bean

ಮತ್ತಿ ಅವರೆ

(math-ee ava-ray)

Psophocarpus tetragonolobus

harvest



60-75
DAYS

sowing

Plant 4-5 seeds
in a composted
mound. Grow onto
trellis or tree

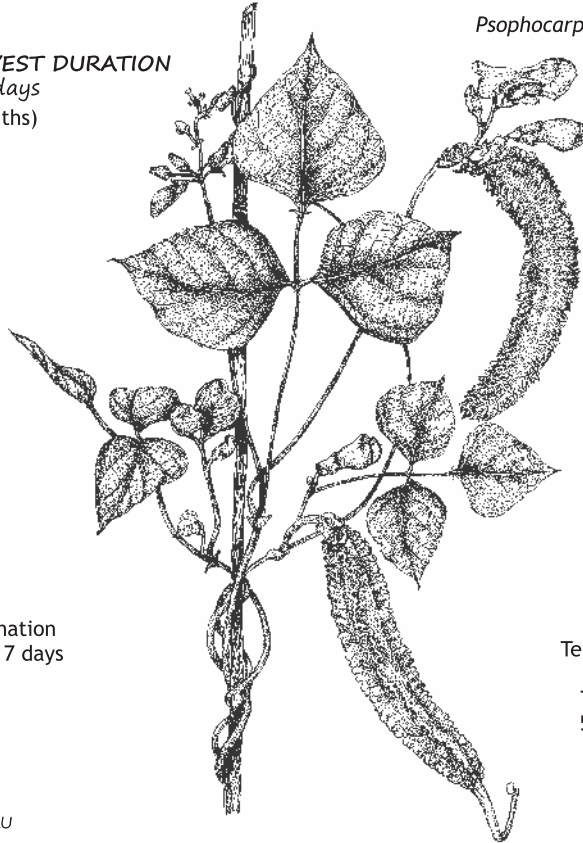


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HARVEST DURATION
120 days
(4 months)

● Germination
within 7 days



Tender beans eaten.

The plant lives for
5-6 years, yielding
each season.

Pods are about
5-6 inches long.

hyacinth bean

ಬಟ್ಟವರೆ

(bhat ava-ray)

Dolichos lablab

harvest
Upto 100
pods per
plant

150
DAYS (5 months)

HARVEST DURATION
210 days
(7 months)

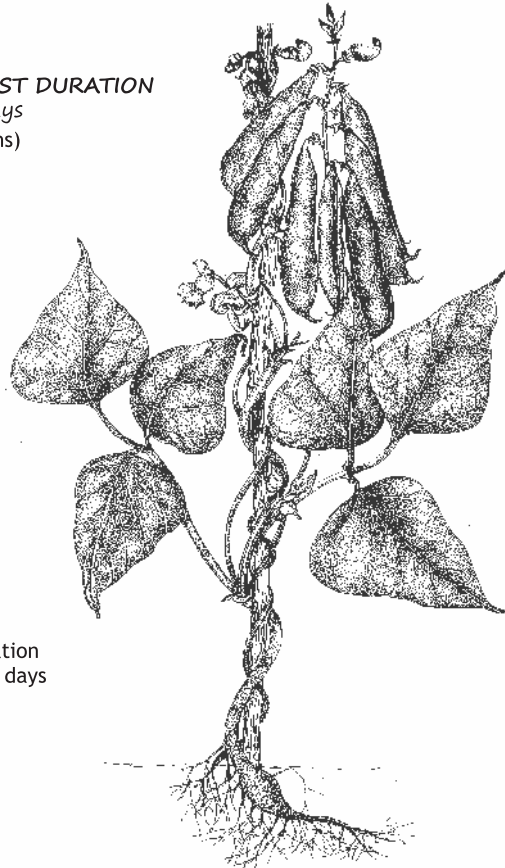


Germination
within 7 days

sowing
Direct sowing.
Grow onto a
trellis or tree



MALNAD & BENGALURU



The plant is
dormant during
the monsoon and
needs pruning.
It will grow again
and yield every
winter for 3-4 years.

The seeds and pods
can be eaten tender.

Seeds are also
dried and eaten.

brinjal

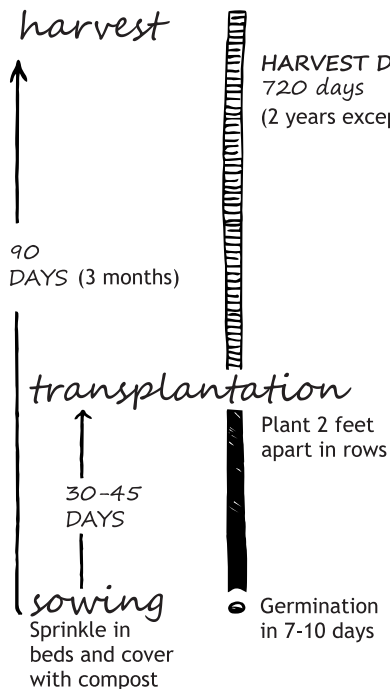
Varieties:

bili, bonda (metre), cholu, daas,
hithalu, musuku, vadhiraaja gulla

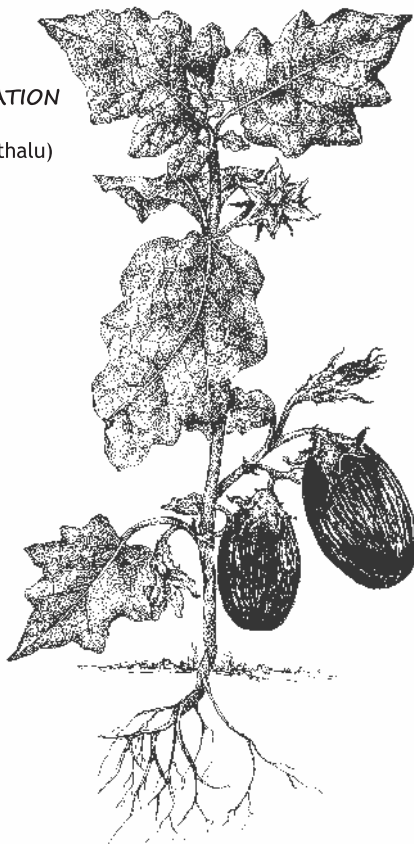
ಬದನೆ

(ba-dha-nay)

Solanum melangena



MALNAD & BENGALURU



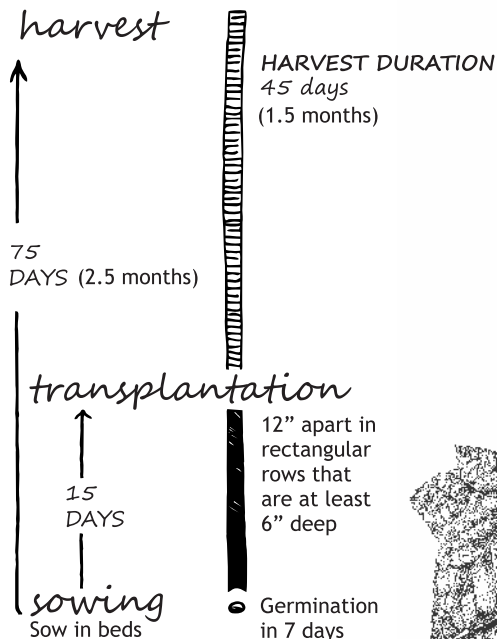
Brinjal is somewhat drought tolerant.

Each plant is known to yield upto 50 kg of brinjal over a period of 2-3 years, if cared for well.

maggay cucumber ಮಗೆ ಕಾಯಿ

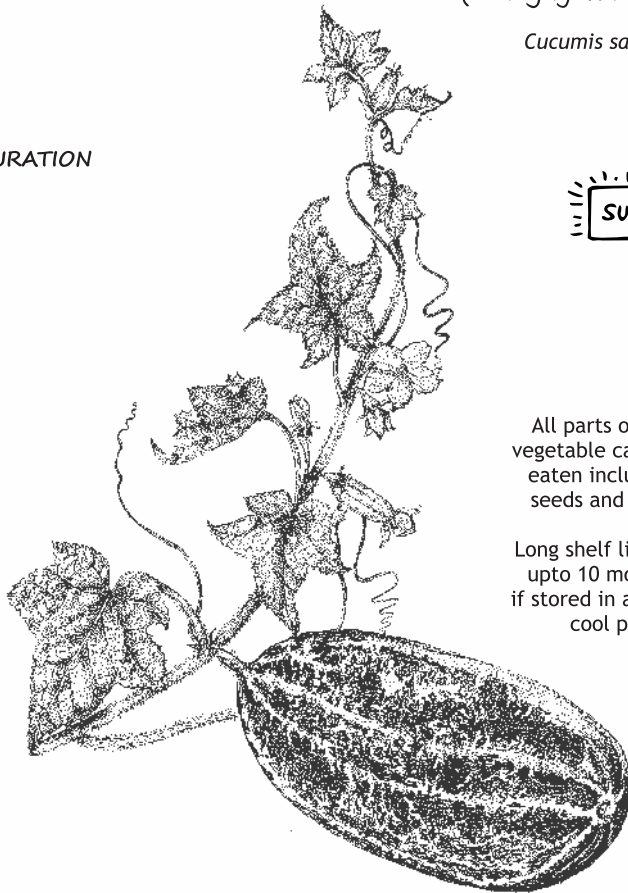
(ma-gay-kaa-yi)

Cucumis sativus



All parts of the vegetable can be eaten including seeds and skin.

Long shelf life of upto 10 months if stored in a dry, cool place.



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spiny cucumber

ಮುಳ್ಳು ಸವತೆ
(mu-llu sa-va-thay)

Cucumis sativus

harvest



60
DAYS (2 months)

sowing

Direct planting
6-8" apart
and train on
ground
or trellis



HARVEST
DURATION
60-90 days
(2-3 months)

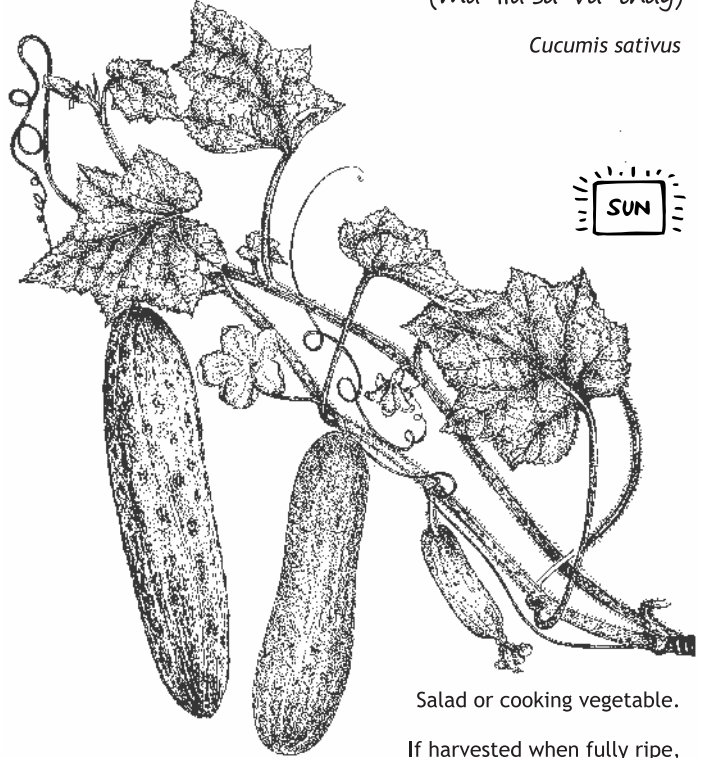
● Germination
within 7 days



MALNAD



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Salad or cooking vegetable.

If harvested when fully ripe,
shelf life is 5-6 months
in a dry place.

Seeds can be made into
juice which is very cooling.

yeray cucumber

ಎರೆ ಸವತೆ

(ya-ray sa-va-thay)

Cucumis sativus

harvest



60-90
DAYS (2-3 months)



HARVEST DURATION

60-90 days

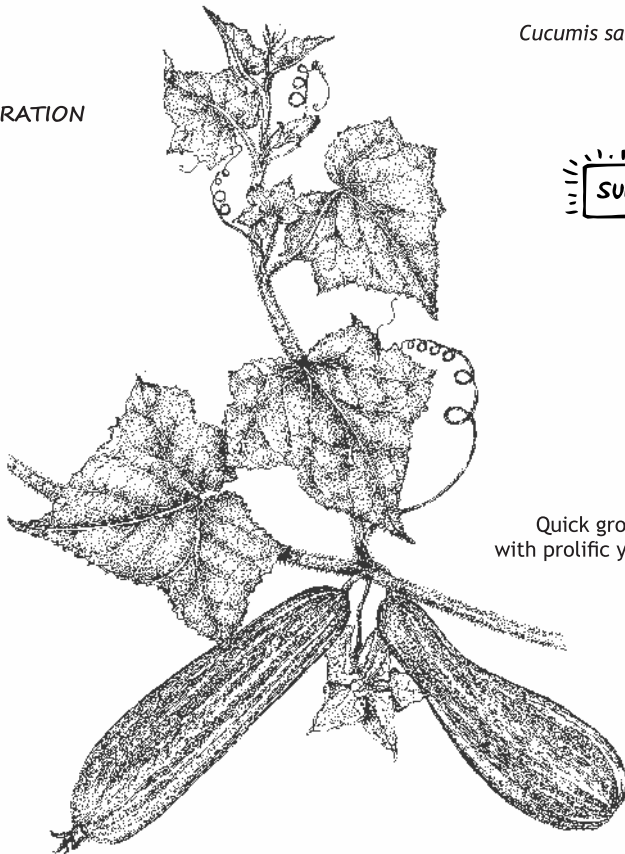
(2-3 months)

Fruits
throughout
the year

Germination
within 7 days



Quick growing
with prolific yield.



sowing

Direct planting
6-8" apart
and train on
ground
or trellis



MALNAD & BENGALURU

chilli

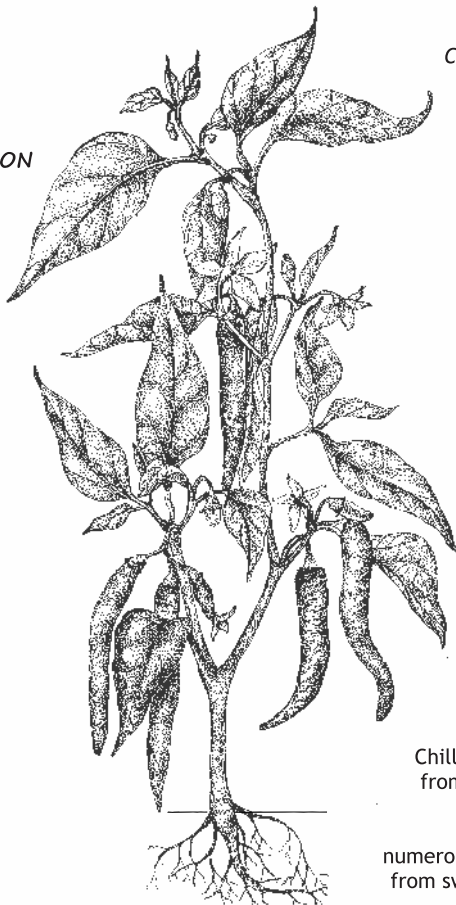
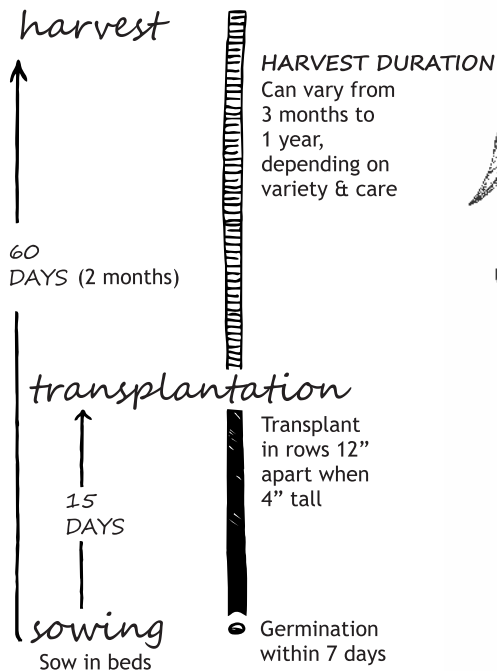
Varieties:

black, bugdi, gokarn, hithalu,
kutumba, mirchi, rajnelli, sooji, santhe

ಮೆಣಸು

(men-asu)

Capsicum annuum



Chillies are originally
from South America.

The Malnad has
numerous local varieties
from sweet to pungent.



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ash gourd

ಬೂದು ಗುಂಬಳ

(boo-dhu goom-ba-la)

Benincasa hispida

harvest

Upto 8
fruits from
each plant

HARVEST DURATION
90-120 days
(3-4 months)

90-120
DAYS (3-4 months)

transplantation

If transplanting,
take care not to
damage roots.

sowing

Plant 4-5 seeds
in well manured
mounds (during
rains) or pits

● Germination
within 7-8 days



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Highly medicinal.

Needs plenty of manure
and water. Can be trained
onto the roof or creep on the
ground. Hand pollination
is usually needed for fruiting.

bitter gourd

Varieties:
bili, gubbi, hasiru

ಹಾಗಲ ಕಾಯಿ

(ha-ga-la kaa-yee)

Momordica charantia

harvest
↑
60
DAYS (2 months)

HARVEST DURATION
365 days
(1 year)

sowing
Plant in rows
6-8" apart

● Germination
within
8-15 days



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Cattle don't forage on bitter gourd. Can be grown on trellis, stake or fence.

Plant fresh seeds as they are viable for 3-6 months at the most.

bottle gourd

Varieties:
long, tamboora

ಹಾಲು ಗುಂಬಳ

(haa-lu goom-ba-la)

Lagenaria siceraria

harvest
Fruit about
2-3 feet
long
120
DAYS (4 months)

HARVEST DURATION
120 days
(4 months)

transplantation

Take care
to keep the
roots intact

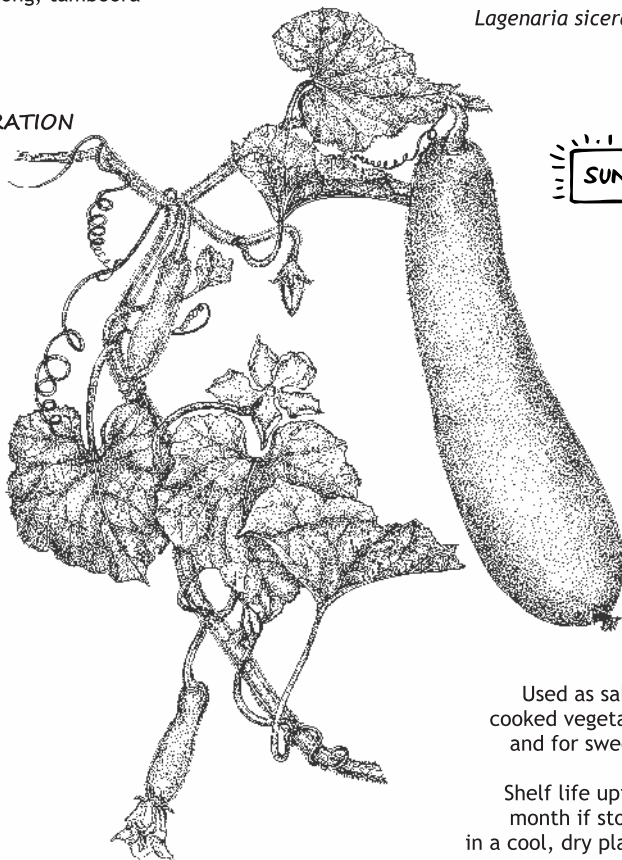
sowing

Plant in manured
pits (or mounds
during rains) &
train on the
roof/ground

Germination
within 7-8 days



MALNAD & BENGALURU



Used as salad,
cooked vegetable
and for sweets.

Shelf life upto 1
month if stored
in a cool, dry place.

pumpkin

Varieties:
long, round

ಉರುಟು ಗೋವೆ

(urutu go-vay)

Cucurbita maxima

harvest

Upto 8
fruits from
each plant

HARVEST DURATION
90-120 days
(3-4 months)

90-120
DAYS (3-4 months)

transplantation

If transplanting,
take care not
to damage
roots.

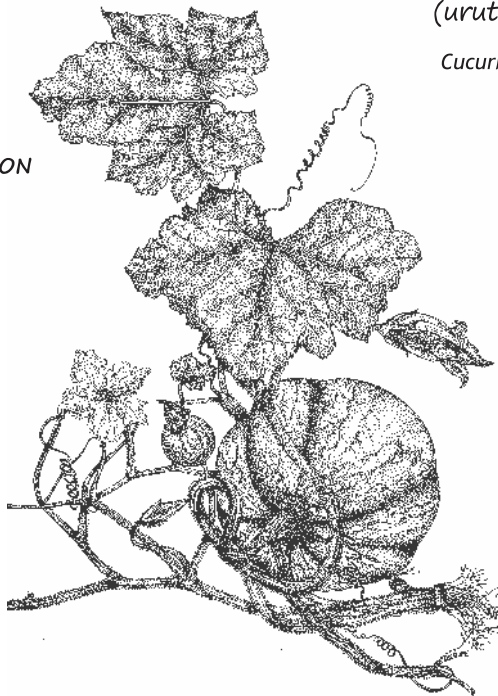
sowing

Plant 4-5 seeds
in well manured
mounds (during
rains) or pits

Germination
within 7-8 days



MALNAD & BENGALURU



Numerous varieties of different sizes and colours.

Plant needs plenty of manure and water. Can be trained onto the roof or creep on the ground. Hand pollination needed most times for fruiting. Flowers and tendrils (kudi) eaten as a vegetable in gojju, hashi and palya.

Shelf life 3-4 months.

ridge gourd

Varieties:
short, medium, long

ಹಿರೆ ಕಾಯಿ

(hee-ray ka-ye)

Luffa acutangula

harvest

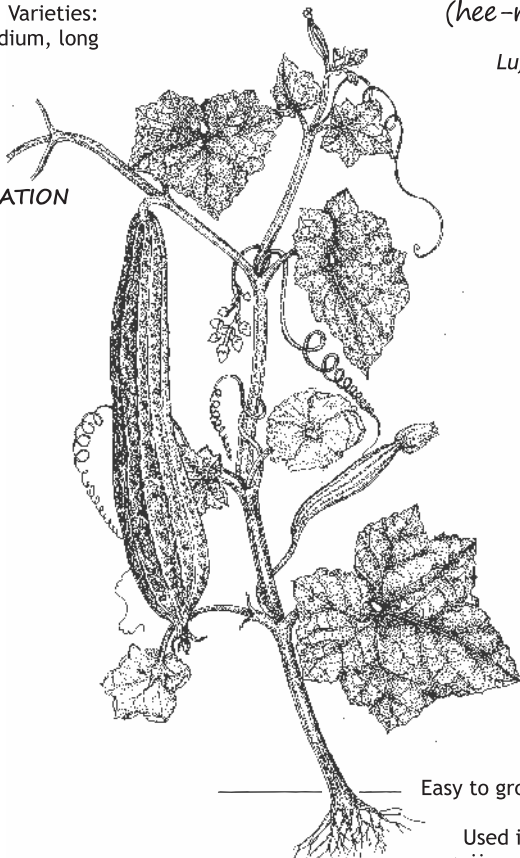


75
DAYS (2.5 months)



HARVEST DURATION
60-90 days
(2-3 months)

Germination
within 7-8 days



Easy to grow and digest.

Used in soup, dosai,
gojju, paysa, chutney
and as vegetable.

sowing

Plant in rows
8" apart and
make a trellis



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sponge gourd

ತುಪ್ಪದ ಹೀರೆ

(thu-ppa-dha hee-ray)

Luffa cylindrica
syn. *aegyptiaca*



harvest



60
DAYS (2 months)

HARVEST DURATION
730 days
(2 years)



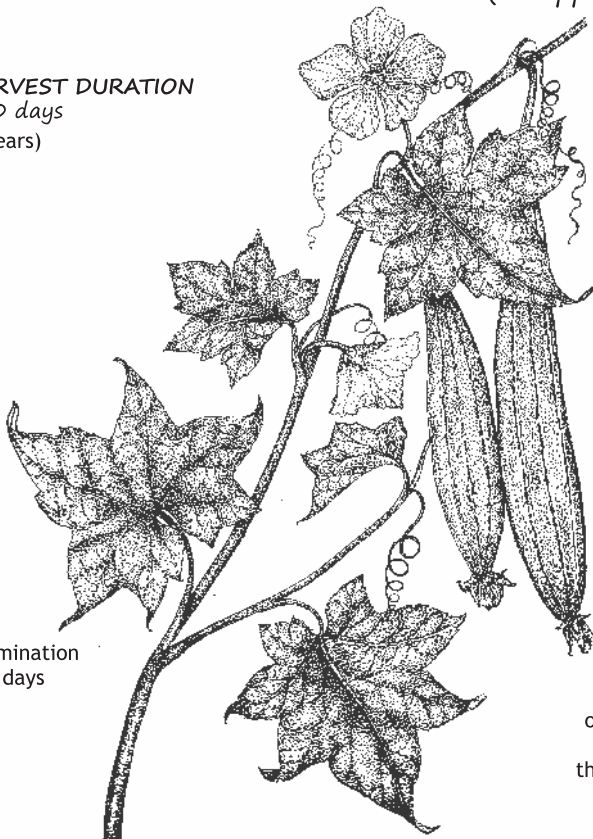
Germination
in 7 days

sowing

2-3 seeds in a pit
at the base of a
tree or support



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Prolific yield,
and no known
pests.

When tender,
can be used as
a vegetable.

When mature
and dry, the
outer skin and seeds
are removed, and
the remaining fibrous
lattice can be used
as a natural
scrubber (loofah).

lady's finger

Varieties:
gubbi, kempu,
elu elay, ethinakodu

ಬೆಂಡೆ ಕಾಯಿ

(ben-day ka-yi)

Abelmoschus esculentus

harvest



60
DAYS (2 months)

sowing

18" apart
in rows



HARVEST DURATION

90 days
(3 months)

Germination
within 10-12 days



Hardy plant.

Cook with tamarind or
buttermilk to reduce mucilage.

Harvest regularly to keep up yield.



MALNAD

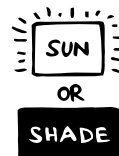
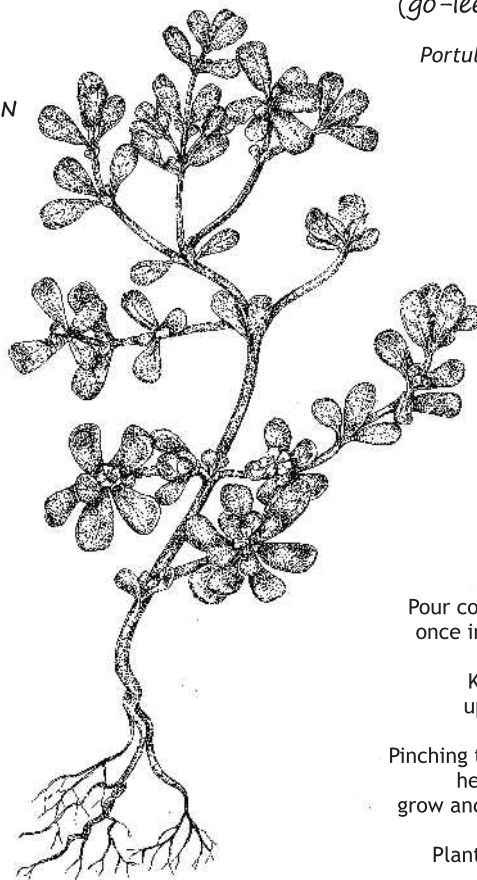
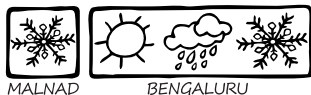
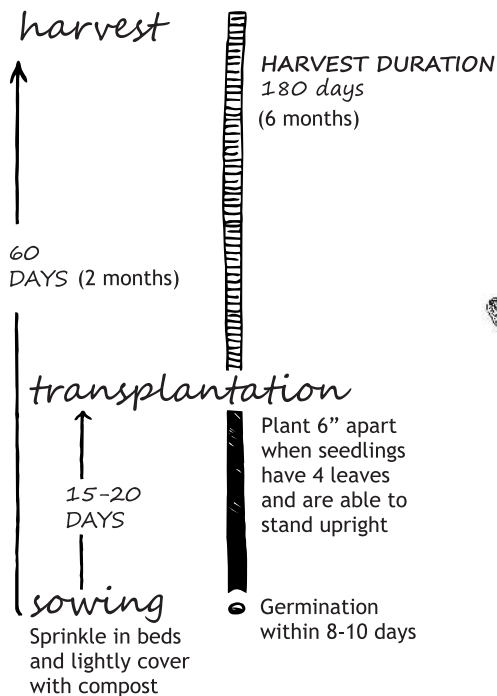


BENGALURU

purslane

ಗೋಳಿ ಸೊಪ್ಪು
(go-lee sop-poo)

Portulaca oleracea



Pour cowdung slurry
once in 15-20 days.

Keep earthing
up plant base.

Pinching tips regularly
helps the plant
grow and spread out.

Plant rots in rain.

malabar spinach

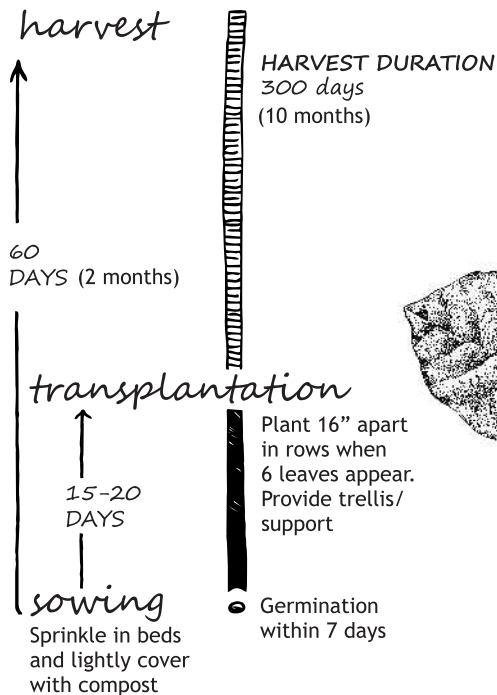
Varieties: hasiru, kempu

ಬಸಲೆ

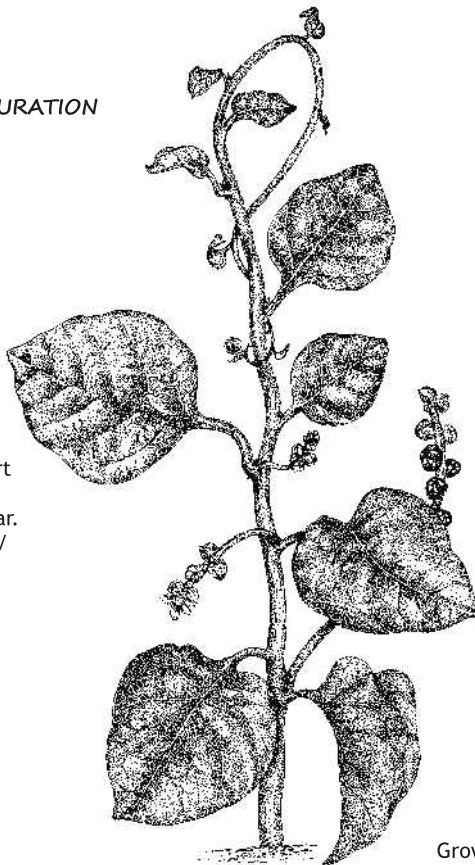
(ba-sa-lay)

Basella alba

Basella rubra



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OR

SHADE

Plant rich in iron.

Pinching tips
regularly helps plant
to grow vigorously.

Grows well at wash
water outlets
(chemical free).

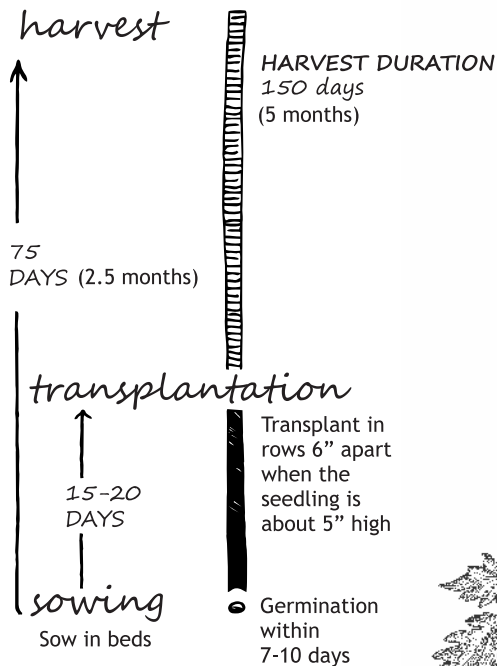
Grows from cuttings also.

tomato

ಟೊಮೆಟೊ

(toe-may-toe)

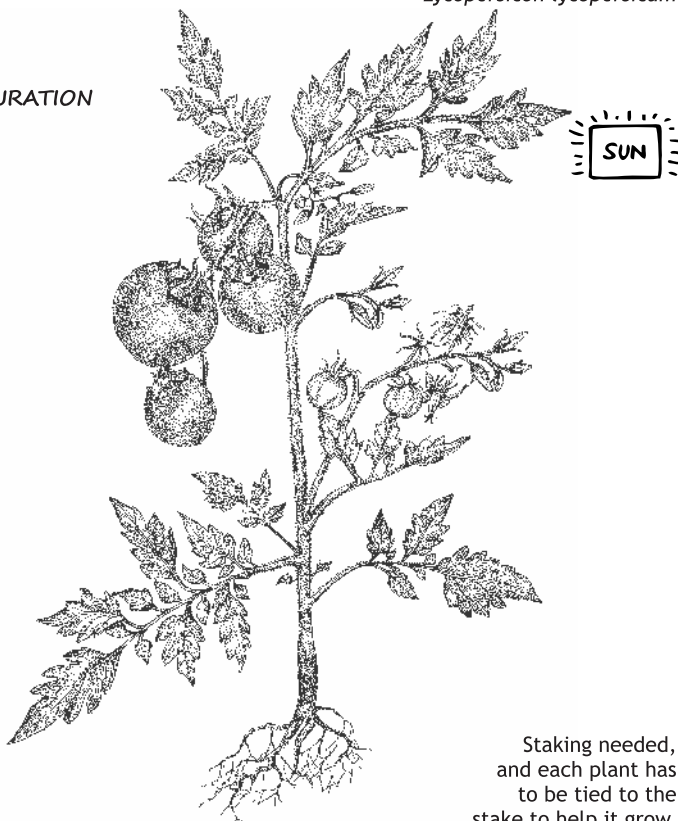
Lycopersicon lycopersicum



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BENGALURU



Staking needed, and each plant has to be tied to the stake to help it grow.

Tubers

Arrowroot	33
Colocasia	34
Elephant Foot Yam	35
Ginger	36
Mango Ginger	37
Sweet Potato	38
Tapioca/Cassava	39
Turmeric	40
Yam (<i>Dioscorea alata</i>)	41
Yam (<i>Dioscorea bulbifera</i>)	42

The generic term “tuber” has been used to cover tubers, rhizomes and corms.

All tubers may be planted in the ground or appropriately sized pots or sacks.
They store well in the earth.

In open ground, tubers may be grown in spaces using well rings one on top of another to curtail bandicoots.

Unless specified, tubers are harvested on a one time basis.

arrowroot

ಅರೋರೂಟ್

(aro-root)

Maranta arundinacea

harvest



180
DAYS (6 months)

planting

Direct planting of
eye buds in
beds 8" apart.
Cover with
compost



Germination
within 15 days



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SHADE

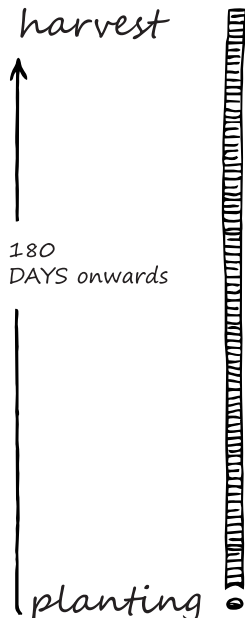
Tubers harvested,
ground, and immersed
in water for 3 days
to remove bitterness.
Dried and used as baby
food or for convalescents.
Long shelf life.

colocasia

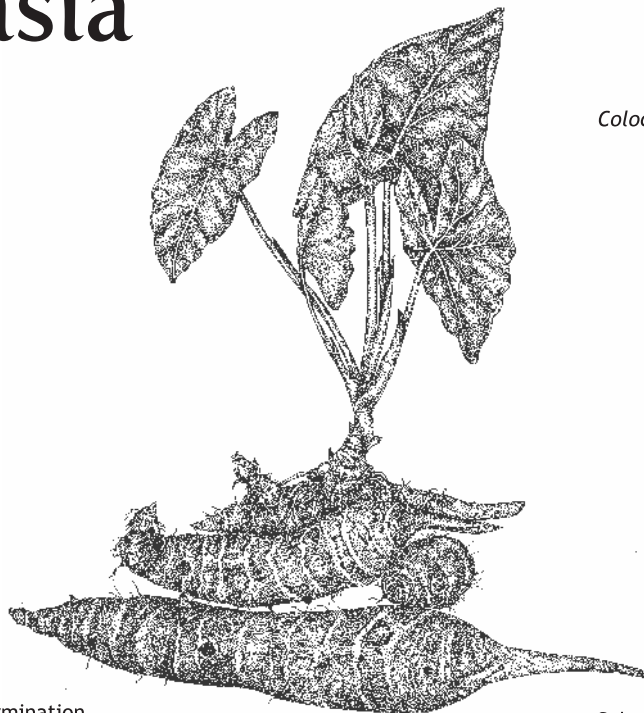
ಕೆಸು

(kay-su)

Colocasia esculenta



180
DAYS onwards



SHADE

Direct planting of small corms to the side of the main one in beds 8" apart or in 1 foot deep trenches for bigger varieties, covered as the plant grows, with loose soil, compost and ash. Basal topping up and mulching important

Germination
within 15 days



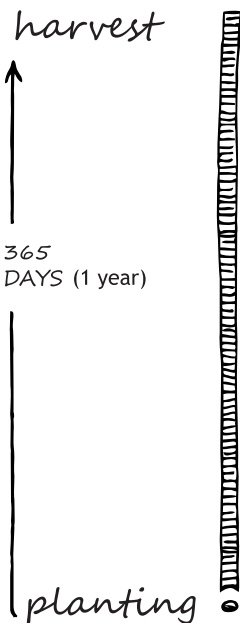
MALNAD & BENGALURU

Colocasia (Taro) has many varieties from small round tubers to 5 foot long ones. Planting method depends on variety. Certain varieties like cheep kesu, mottay kesu & kari kesu need to be boiled in tamarind water to prevent itching in mouth. Shelf life is upto a year or more in a cool, dry, dark place. Leaves of some used to make patrode.

elephant foot yam

ಸುವರ್ಣ ಗಡ್ಡೆ
(su-var-na gad-day)

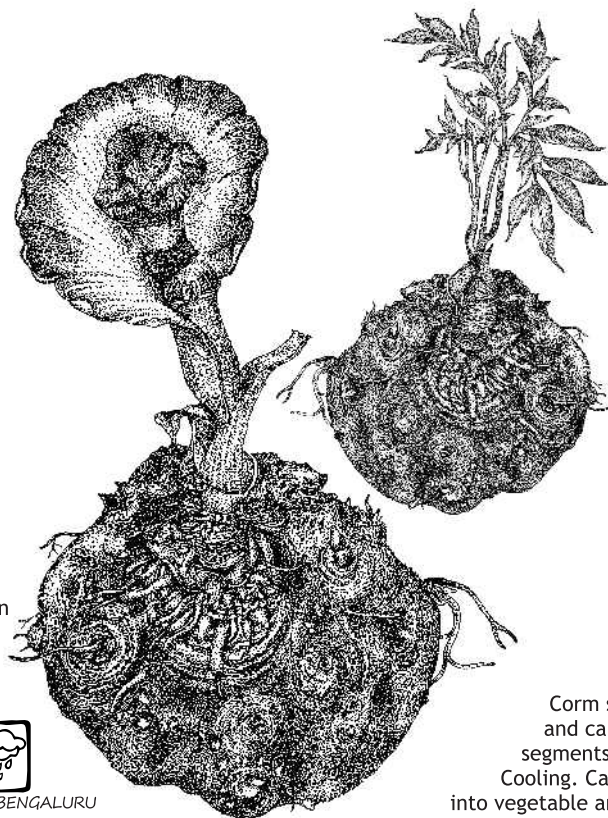
Amorphophallus spp.



Germination
within
15 days



MALNAD & BENGALURU



Corm stores well
and can be cut in
segments and used.
Cooling. Can be made
into vegetable and sambar.

ginger

ಪುಂಡಿ

(shoon-tee)

Zingiber officinale

harvest



180
DAYS (6 months)

planting

Direct planting of rhizome eye buds in beds 6 inches apart covered with loose soil, compost and ash. Basal topping up and mulching important



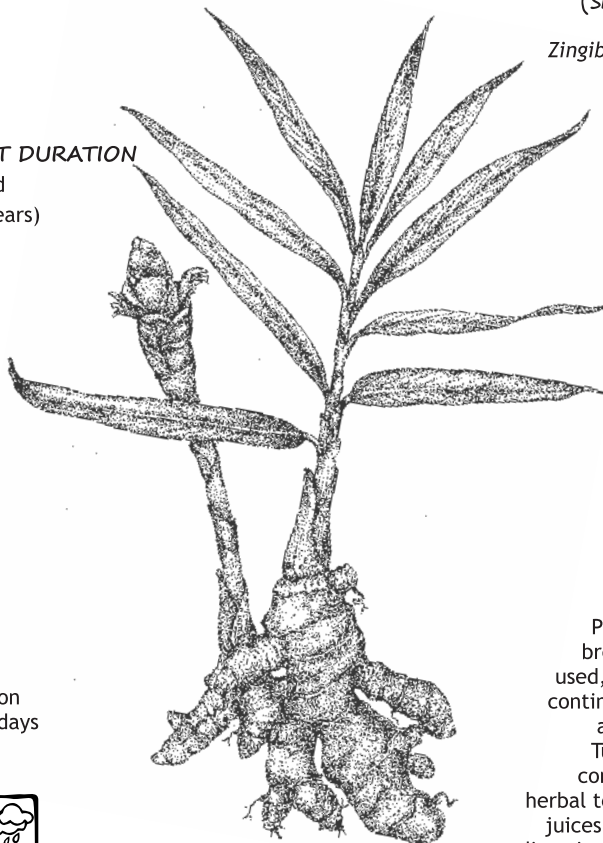
HARVEST DURATION

year round
(several years)

Germination
within 15 days



MALNAD & BENGALURU



OR

SHADE

Pieces can be broken off and used, while plant continues growing and yielding.

Tuber used as condiment, for herbal teas, pickles, juices, cough mix, digestive & botanical pest control.

mango ginger

ಮಾವಿನ ಶುಂಠಿ

(maa-vee-na shoon-tee)

Curcuma amada

harvest



300
DAYS (10 months)

planting

Direct planting of
rhizome eye buds in
beds 6 inches apart
with rows 1 foot
apart, covered with
compost and mulch



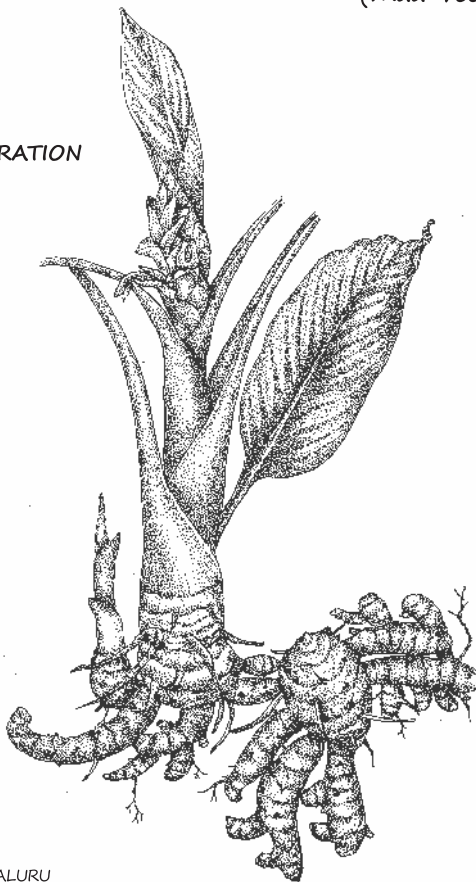
HARVEST DURATION

year round
(several years)

Germination
within 15 days



MALNAD & BENGALURU



OR

SHADE

Tuber belongs to
the ginger family.

Exudes aroma
of unripe mango
and used to make
fresh chutney,
pickle and tambuli.

sweet potato

ಸಿಹಿ ಗೆಣಸು

(see-hee ge-na-su)

Ipomoea batatas

harvest



180
DAYS (6 months)

planting

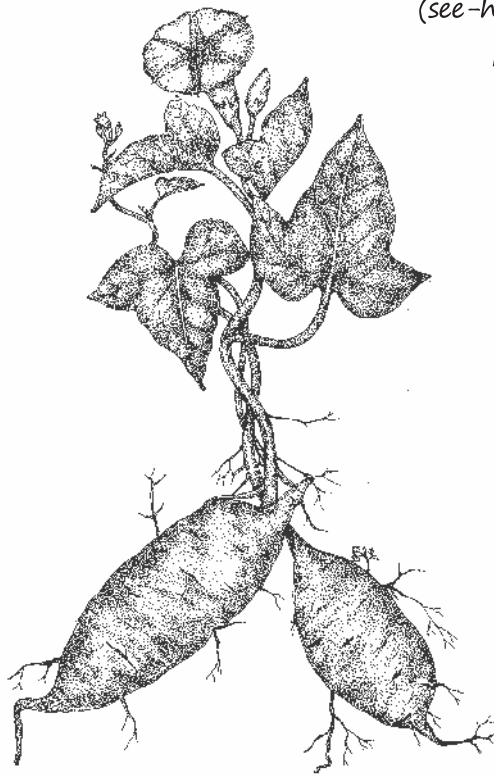
Direct planting of
stem cuttings in
beds 1 foot apart
with rows also
1 foot apart.
Earth up for
better production



Takes root
within 15 days



MALNAD & BENGALURU



OR

SHADE

Root eaten steamed
with salt and lemon, or
as vegetable, in sambar
and even made into holigay.
Young leaves good as greens.

tapioca

ಬರಗಾಲ ಗೆಣಸು
(ba-ra-ga-la ge-na-su)

ಮರ ಗೆಣಸು
(ma-ra ge-na-su)

Manihot utilisima

harvest



240
DAYS (8 months)

planting

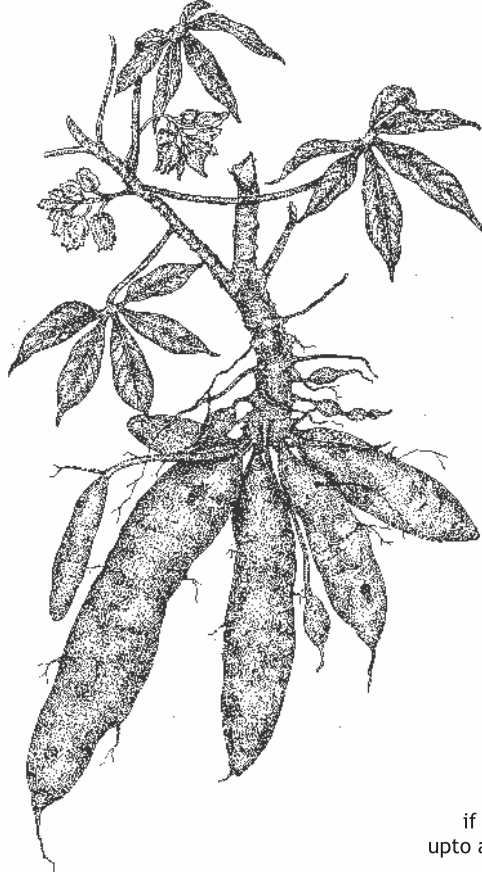
Direct planting of
cuttings in rows
with mulching



MALNAD & BENGALURU



Takes root
within
15 days



OR

SHADE

Tapioca is also
known as cassava.

Hardy and does not
need much care.

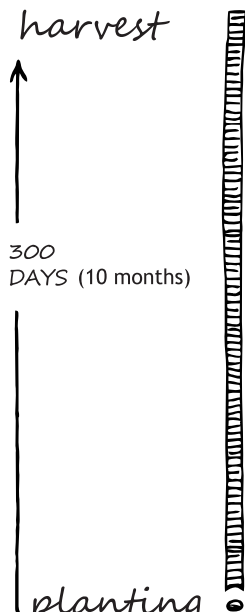
Tuber stores well
in the soil/ground
if attached to plant or
upto a week post harvest.

turmeric

ಅರಿಷಿನ

(ah-ree-she-naa)

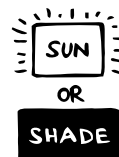
Curcuma longa



Germination
within
15 days



MALNAD & BENGALURU



Tuber highly
medicinal.

Harvested, washed,
cut into pieces,
sun dried, milled, sieved
and powder stored to
be used as condiment.
Fresh tuber used in cooking,
pickles, tambuli, & gojju.

yam

ನೆಗಿಲು ಗೆಣಸು

(nay-gilu gay-na-soo)

Dioscorea alata

harvest



180
DAYS (6 months)

planting

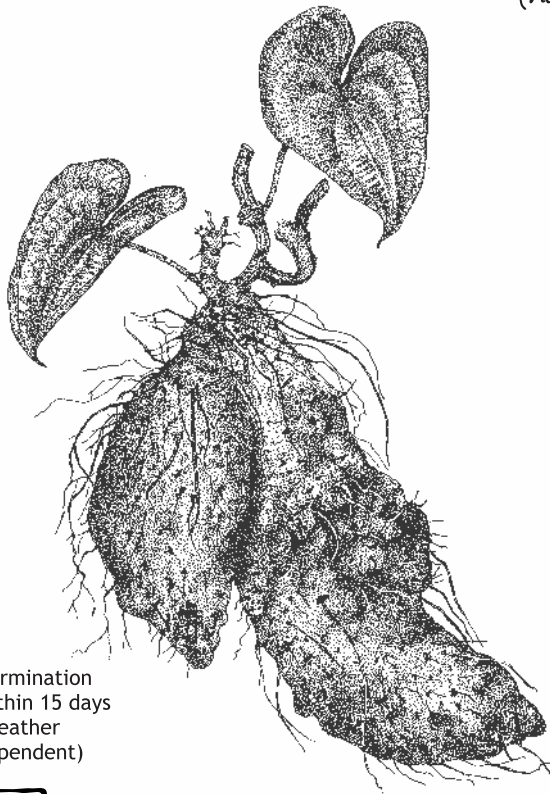
Direct planting of
eye buds in pits,
next to trees
or trellis.
Cover with
compost/ rich
manure



Germination
within 15 days
(weather
dependent)



MALNAD & BENGALURU



SHADE

Several *Dioscorea*
species exist
including wild ones.
Shelf life of harvested
tuber up to 6 months.
Yields aerial, edible
tubers which can also
be planted. Mother
tuber eaten, roasted
boiled or steamed.

yam

ಹೆಡಿಗೆ ಗೆಣಸು

(hey-dee-gay gay-na-soo)

Dioscorea bulbifera

harvest



240-365

DAYS

(8 months to 1 year)

planting

Direct planting of
eye buds in pits,
next to trees
or trellis.

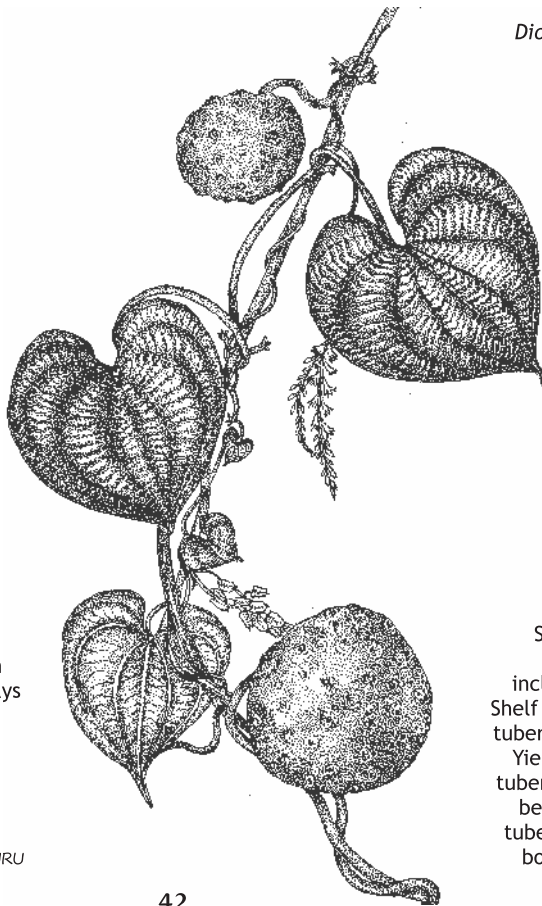
Cover with
compost/ rich
manure



Germination
within 15 days
(weather
dependent)



MALNAD & BENGALURU



SHADE

Several Dioscorea
species exist
including wild ones.
Shelf life of harvested
tuber up to 6 months.
Yields aerial, edible
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tuber eaten, roasted
boiled or steamed.

Flowers

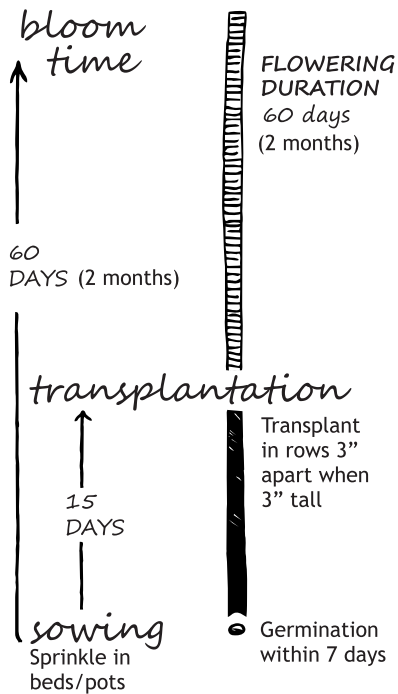
Balsam	44
Butterfly Pea	45
Canna	46
Cosmos	47
Four O'clock Flower	48
Marigold	49
Zinnia	50

balsam

ಸೋಣೆ

(so-nay)

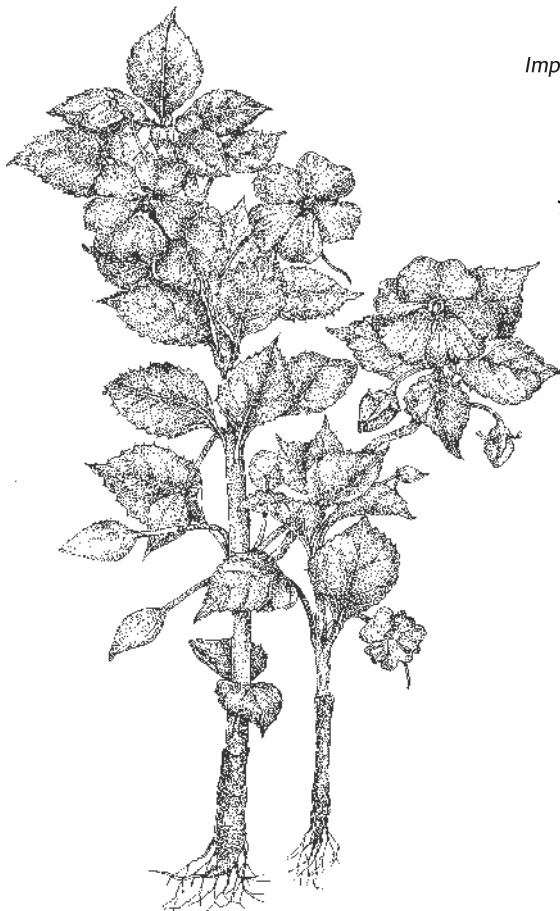
Impatiens spp.



MALNAD



BENGALURU



OR

SHADE

butterfly pea

ಶಂಖ ಪುಷ್ಪ

(shan-kha push-pa)

Clitoria terneata

bloom
time



90
DAYS (3 months)



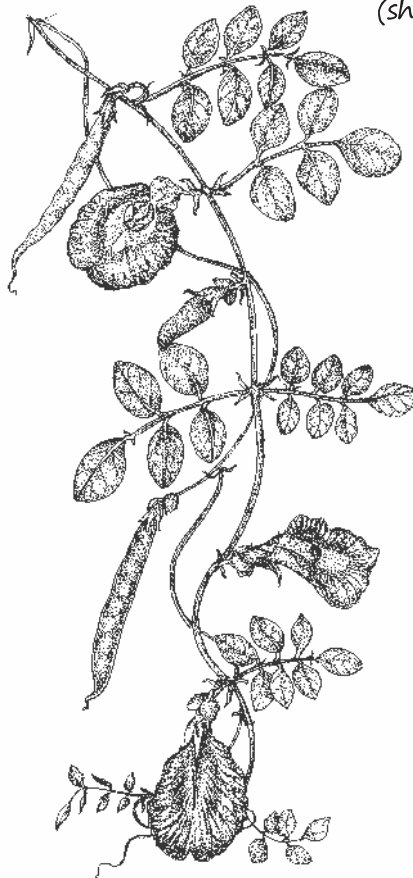
sowing
In beds/pots



FLOWERING
DURATION

perennial that
will flower for
many years

● Germination
within 8-10 days



OR

SHADE



MALNAD & BENGALURU

Flower medicinal,
used to make juice
and in religious
rituals.

canna

ಕಾಬಾಳೆ

(kaa-ba-lay)

Canna spp.

bloom
time



90
DAYS (3 months)



sowing

In beds/pots



FLOWERING DURATION

year round perennial

● Germination
within 10 days



OR

SHADE



Thrives in
water logged areas.

Suckers also
used for planting.



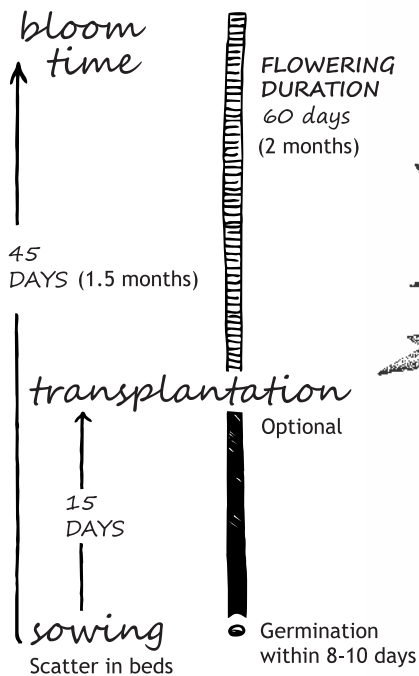
MALNAD & BENGALURU

cosmos

ಕೇತಕಿ

(kay-tha-ki)

Cosmos spp.



MALNAD & BENGALURU

Plants are self seeding and you can have a permanent bed of cosmos once planted.

four O'clock flower

ಸಂಜೆ ಮಲ್ಲಿಗೆ
(san-je ma-lli-gay)

Mirabilis jalapa

bloom
time



90
DAYS (3 months)



sowing

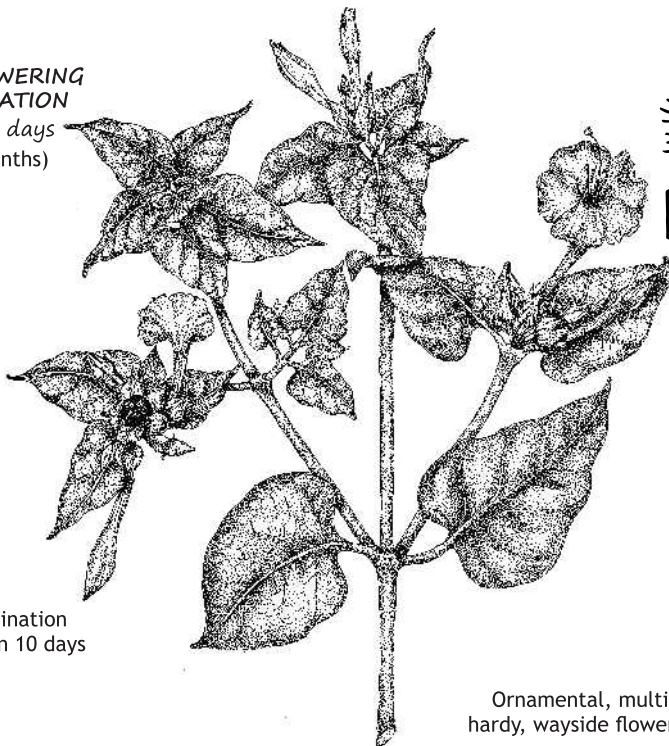
In beds/pots



FLOWERING
DURATION

180 days
(6 months)

● Germination
within 10 days



OR

SHADE

Ornamental, multi-coloured,
hardy, wayside flowering plant.



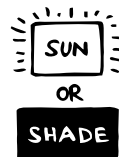
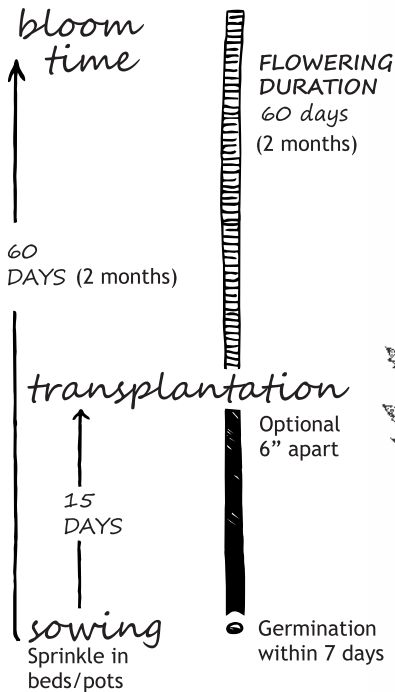
MALNAD & BENGALURU

marigold

ಚೆಂಡು ಹವು
(chen-doo hoo-vu)

ಗೊಂಡೆ ಹವು
(gon-day hoo-vu)

Tagetes spp.



Hardy plant - ideal for
borders and hedges.

Flowers and leaves have
insecticidal properties.

Used as companion
plants in food gardens.



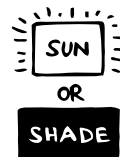
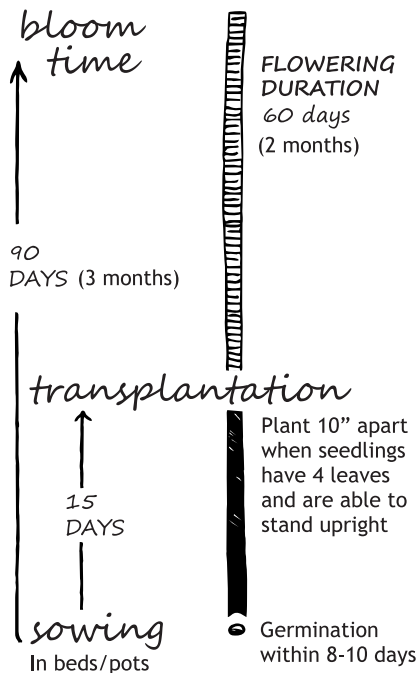
MALNAD & BENGALURU

zinnia

ಜಿನಿಯಾ

(jin-niya)

Zinnia spp.



Hardy multi-coloured
ornamental.

Flowers stay
a long time.



MALNAD & BENGALURU

Planting Calendar

Vegetables	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Amaranth (green)												
Amaranth (red)												
Ash Gourd												
Bean, Sword												
Bean, Winged												
Bean, Hyacinth												
Bean, Yard Long (angikase)												
Bean, 30 Day												
Bitter Gourd												
Bitter Gourd (gubbi)												
Bottle Gourd												
Brinjal (other varieties)												
Brinjal (hithalu)												
Chilli												
Cucumber, Spiny												
Cucumber, Yeray												

Planting Calendar

Vegetables	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cucumber, Maggay												
Lady's Finger												
Malabar Spinach												
Purslane												
Pumpkin												
Ridge Gourd												
Snake Gourd												
Spinach												
Sponge Gourd												
Tomato												

Tubers

Arrowroot												
Colocasia (Taro)												
Elephant Foot Yam												
Ginger												
Mango Ginger												

Planting Calendar

Tubers	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Sweet Potato												
Tapioca (Cassava)												
Turmeric												
Yam (Dioscorea)												

Flowers

Balsam												
Butterfly Pea												
Canna												
Cosmos												
Four O'clock Flower												
Marigold												
Zinnia												

This is a seasonal planting chart for the Malnad where the monsoon rains are heavy (250-800 cm per annum). Bengaluru and other drier areas would have a longer planting (sowing) season.



= planting period

Notes

Notes

Notes

Notes

Notes