

# KIWICHA

*Amaranthus caudatus* (Kiwuicha) is a species of annual flowering plant. It goes by common names such as love-lies-bleeding, pendant amaranth, tassel flower, velvet flower, foxtail amaranth, and quilete.

Many parts of the plants, including the leaves and seeds, are edible, and are frequently used as a source of food in India and South America — where it is the most important Andean species of *Amaranthus*, known as Kiwicha (see also andean ancient plants).

This species, as with many other of the *Amaranthus*, are originally from the American tropics. The exact origin is unknown, as *A. caudatus* is believed to be a wild *Amaranthus hybridus* aggregate.

The red color of the inflorescences is due to a high content of betacyanins, like in the related species known as "Hopi Red Dye" amaranth.

*Amaranthus cruentus* is a common flowering plant species that yields the nutritious staple amaranth grain. It is one of three *Amaranthus* species cultivated as a grain source, the other two being *A. hypochondriacus* and *A. caudatus*.

## Uses

The seeds are eaten as a cereal grain. They are black in the wild plant, and white in the domesticated form. They are ground into flour, popped like popcorn, cooked into a porridge, and made into a confectionery called alegría. The leaves can be cooked like spinach, and the seeds can be germinated into nutritious sprouts. While *A. cruentus* is no longer a staple food, it is still grown and sold as a health food.

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