



The Herb Society of America

Promising Plants Profiles

***Amaranthus caudatus* 'Fat Spike'**

Genus: *Amaranthus*
Specific Epithet: *caudatus*
Cultivar Name: 'Fat Spike'
Common Name: elephant nose
Family: Amaranthaceae

Flower Color: crimson
Form: erect annual
Hardiness Zone: 6
Height: 4'
Soil: moist but well-drained soil
Sun: full sun

Uses: culinary (leaves, seeds)*, craft (flowers),
ornamental

Parts Used: leaves, seeds, flowers



"This is an unusual cultivar of the well-known tassel flower or love-lies-bleeding, which has long drooping flower spikes. It is also a colorful annual that makes a bold statement in the garden, reaching 4 feet tall, with an inflorescence some 15 inches or more across at its widest. In mass, under-planted with the golden potato vine, *Ipomoea batatas* 'Marguerite,' it's a real knockout. Easily grown from seed sown under glass in cold areas or outdoors where there is no risk of frost, *Amaranthus caudatus* thrives in most soils, even poor ones, but grows bigger and better in more fertile conditions with plenty of moisture. The seeds are hard to harvest in quantity but useful as a grain in cookies and bread. Laying a sheet down under the plants is the easiest way. The young leaves can be used in salads, stir-fry and as a potherb. The large bloom holds well on the plant in late summer into fall and self-seeds freely in zone 7A **." – Dorothy Bonitz, Promising Plants Presentation, 2005

*Although the leaves and seeds are edible, *Amaranthus caudatus* is not considered GRAS (Generally Recognized as Safe). Nitrates from chemical fertilizers are reported to concentrate in the leaves, so only organic fertilizers should be used if the plant will be consumed. In addition, there are reports of toxicity to livestock.

***Amaranthus caudatus* 'Fat Spike' also reportedly re-seeds in Zone 6.

Photo by Dorothy Bonitz
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Disclaimer: Profiles are intended to provide a brief introduction to each herb. For additional information on uses, including medicinal contraindications, see the References list. The Herb Society of America can not advise, recommend, or prescribe herbs for medicinal use. Please consult a health care provider before pursuing any herbal treatments. Inclusion of vendor information does not indicate an endorsement by The Herb Society of America, and HSA can not guarantee availability of seeds/plants.