

Companion Planting

Second Generation collaborates with farmers across the country to exchange, grow, and adapt seeds, cultivating the bond between the Asian, South West Asian, and North African diasporas and the plants that have co-evolved alongside us. Let us introduce you to some of the growers in our community and explore their favorite "Companion Plants."



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secondgenerationseeds.com



Japanese Indigo

Emily Tzeng

Local Color Farm and Fiber

Emily Tzeng lives and farms in the Puyallup River Valley of Washington State on the unceded territory of the Puyallup Tribe. She grows mixed vegetables, sheep, and natural dyes. She enjoys providing wildly diverse and colorful veggies to her community and extracting pigment from plants to dye locally grown fibers.

あいぞめ
藍染め
"Aizome" indigo dye



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@localcolorfarmandfiber

Japanese Indigo

What does this crop mean to you?

Indigo is the first plant that got me interested in natural dyeing. I still find it so magical that a lush green plant can produce pure blue pigment.

What makes the variety you grow unique?

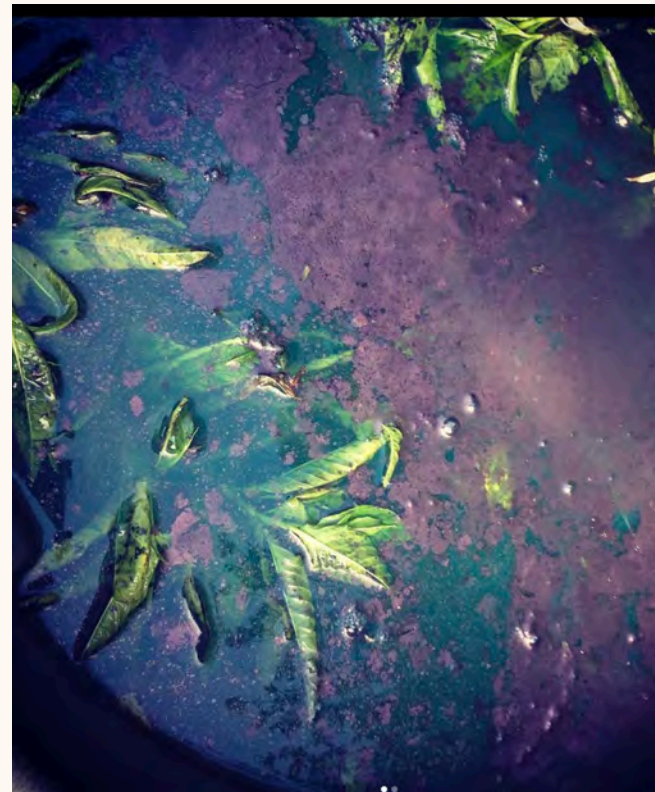
My favorite variety has large, pointed leaves, pink flowers, and reliably sets seed by the end of September. All of the pigment is concentrated in the leaves, so larger leaves are preferable.

What's important to know about growing this crop?

Japanese Indigo loves a lot of nitrogen and water! Having enough of both really improves the amount of pigment produced. Younger leaves also have more pigment than older leaves, so it is preferable to take several smaller harvests than one big harvest.



Indigo dyed fabrics



Indigo fermentation in progress at Local Color Farm and Fiber

Companion Planting



Curry Leaf Tree

Zee Husain
Kula Nursery

کڑی پتہ

Kula Nursery is a grassroots urban nursery working within and for BIPOC communities to increase food sovereignty through gardening education and culturally relevant plant starts. The mission at Kula Nursery is to reconnect the diaspora with heritage food, strengthen food sovereignty among these communities, and promote cultural and biological diversity. As a heritage nursery, we believe the act of growing, tending to, and eating heritage foods encourages folks to reclaim their power within the local food system while simultaneously honoring and reconnecting to their ancestors, immediate family and community at large.



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@kula.nursery

Curry Leaf Tree

What does this crop mean to you?

Curry leaf trees have been a ubiquitous houseplant in both my grandparents' and parents' homes for as long as I can remember. We add the leaves of this tree to tadkas (blooming spices in oil), lentils, sambar, and so much more! Curry leaves can be hard to find, so having a tree at home means we can properly make our culture's dishes without sacrificing flavor or tradition. The scent of these leaves alone stirs up childhood memories of large family meals and the comfort of family and tradition, loved ones plucking the leaves and adding them to a big pot of something special cooking on the stove.

What qualities make the variety you grow unique?

There are 3 varieties of curry leaf tree. Gamthi is typically used in Southern India. The leaves of the "dwarf" variety are much smaller and the plant's mature height only reaches 2-3 feet. The variety I am most familiar with is the "Regular" variety. The leaves grow on petioles that can reach up to 1' long. If the plant is healthy and happy, the leaves have a shiny, almost glossy, dark green color.

What's important to know about growing this crop?

Curry leaf trees grown outside of tropical regions must be top pruned! If left to grow without interference, the tree will eventually become a tall, skinny stick due to apical dominance. Consistent top pruning of the shoots will promote a bushy plant with more leaf production.



Curry leaves have a complex, nutty, somewhat pungent flavor. The tree is in the same family as citrus, *Rutaceae*, and the leaves have a citrus-like aroma

Companion Planting



Maramiyya

Nadia Barhoum

Thurayya Seeds

Through her initiative Thurayya, Nadia cultivates and preserves heritage seeds from Palestine and neighboring regions. Nestled in the heart of the Bay Area on Ohlone land, her efforts are not just about safeguarding seeds but also preserving traditions, recipes, and the cultural memory that these plants carry. She started farming in 2019, driven by a desire to connect to the land in the way generations of her family had, in the village of al-Malha, Palestine, until they were forcibly displaced in 1948 by Israeli armed militias. Thurayya, named after the Arabic word for the Pleiades star cluster, represents Nadia's unwavering commitment to rekindling and preserving the sacred relationship between people and the land, a connection that has been fractured by decades of occupation and dispossession in the Southwest Asia and North Africa (SWANA) region. She believes that these seeds, each with a unique story to tell, can bridge the gap between distant homelands and her community, offering a taste of home and a powerful connection to their roots.

مير حبة



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@thurayya_seeds

Maramiyya

What does this crop mean to you?

Maramiyya holds a special place in my heart. It's very significant to Palestinian culture. Growing up, when I would visit Palestine during the summers, my uncle would take me for walks through the hillsides to forage and pick maramiyya, among other herbs. We'd bring them home, lay them out to dry, and then use it as a tea. It's medicinal, often used to relieve various ailments such as stomach pain or indigestion, menstrual cramps and menopausal discomfort. The name "maramiyya" is derived from "Maryam," meaning Virgin Mary, who was said to have given the plant to a sick child. So, for me, maramiyya embodies both cultural heritage and healing magic.

What makes your preferred variety of maramiyya unique?

The maramiyya variety native to Palestine and the eastern Mediterranean, scientifically known as "*salvia fruticosa*," has a distinctive charm. Its leaves are small, and very curly when dried. They're also a bit thicker and have a slightly furry texture. But what sets it apart for me is knowing how many hands have returned to the same wild plants over the years, generation after generation. That makes me feel more connected to the plant and those who have visited it.

What's important to know about growing this crop?

To get the most potent oil content, it's best to harvest it in the fall before the winter rains. When you do decide to harvest, trim the non-woody stems. Like most herbs, allow it to grow for at least a year before harvesting. If you don't want to save seeds, don't hesitate to cut off the flowers. And remember, this plant is very drought-resistant, thriving in hot, sunny conditions. It prefers well-draining soil and rocky terrain, much like its native Palestinian hillsides.





Wheat

Dr. Mehmet Öztan

Two Seeds in a Pod

Buğday

My ideal bread is soft on the inside, perfect for dipping in stew and absorbing sauces.

Mehmet Öztan is a Turkish seed keeper/grower, farmer, and a public scholar who focuses on restoration and preservation of the seeds of Türkiye on his six-acre farm located in Reedsville, West Virginia, land of Seneca people.



@twoseedsinapod

Wheat

Companion Planting

What does this crop mean to you?

I lived in Trabzon, Northern Turkey, with my family, until I was six years old. White bread is the staple food in Turkey, and I strongly associate wheat with the huge, round loaves of bread I had as a child.



What makes this crop unique?

I am always looking for wheat that can be used to achieve the flavor and texture I appreciate most in white bread – soft on the inside, crunchy on the outside when fresh. I'm constantly growing and evaluating non-white wheat from Turkey, and the qualities I look for are cold-hardiness, emergence in cold soil conditions, disease resistance and yield.



What's important to know about growing this crop?

There's an Anatolian tradition of over-planting wheat so that birds and other living beings can share what we plant. Since I have a limited quantity of seeds for the wheat varieties I grow, I currently hand-plant everything in three rows about 6-8 inches apart on the planting bed and cover the seeds to maximize the number of seedlings. I separate each variety with 3-4 feet of space along the bed, with each bed 4-5 feet apart.



Celtuce

Leslie Wisner 潘曉航

Radical Family Farms

Leslie Wisner was born in Chicago and raised throughout the Midwest. In her early 20s, she spent a season working on an organic farm in Palmer, Alaska, where her passion for regenerative agriculture took root. A first-generation mixed person of Chinese-Taiwanese, German, and Polish Jewish descent, she rarely found her story and cultural heritage reflected in mainstream society and American agricultural communities. The lack of representation has inspired her to explore her multifaceted heritage through the work she pursues. When Leslie had her children, she wanted them to respect where their food comes from, and knew that food would be their main connection to their Korean Chinese-Taiwanese heritage. Radical Family Farms is the culmination of a 20-year dream to farm and just another step in the lifelong exploration of heritage.

@radicalfamilyfarms

莴笋



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Celtuce

Companion Planting

What does this crop mean to you?

Celtuce is one of my favorite crops we grow on the farm. In Chinese, it's called wosun 莴笋 (lettuce shoots) or qingsun 青笋 (green shoots). It's a beloved vegetable. When I bring it up to relatives from mainland China, they get very excited. I hadn't heard of it until I started the farm in 2019. I was very surprised by my first taste. It's nutty, crunchy, and earthy. Visually, it's just so beautiful! When you stir-fry pieces of the stem they turn a bright, jade-green color. You can cut the tops off and use them in soups, stews and stir fries. They have a slightly bitter taste, compared to the stem, but it's not overpowering. I love the crunchy stems of the leaves.

What makes your preferred variety unique?

We grow three different varieties as part of our crop plan, all sourced from Kitazawa Seed Co. The Summer 38 Variety has a girthier stem and pointed leaves. The outer peel is thicker, and when you peel off that external layer, the flesh is a beautiful, bright green. It can be grown close to year round in this location and it's pretty reliable in terms of production. The other varieties we grow are Taiwan sword lettuce (aka a tsai, ai choy) and nu yu mai. We let these varieties elongate into a "celtuce" for a 2-in-1 crop -- stem and greens. The leaves are a bit more delicate than the Summer 38. They're a lighter, brighter yellow green.

What's important to know about growing this crop?

Germination can be pretty tricky, especially when temperatures are high. They can go into dormancy. Generally, we get the best germination in spring, early summer and fall. We seed and crate transplants and hand transplant them into the ground. We don't direct-seed; the failure rate would be too high. Sometimes Summer 38s will get hollow heart, a hole in the stem that's caused by too much watering or high temperatures. All three varieties go through the same system of watering and fertilizing. We grow 60 different crop varieties, and we can't give each individual plant exact watering and nutrient needs. We put row cover over all of our celtuce. They don't have to have cover, but the leaves will be more tender and beautiful.





Shungiku

Kellee Matsushita-Tseng

Second Generation Seeds

Kellee's work focuses on building a movement towards seed sovereignty as a means of cultivating community health and working for collective liberation. They lead community seed salons and grow food and medicine on the unceded territory of the Awaswas-speaking Uypi Tribe with a group of queer and trans AAPI humans. #bittercotyledons

春菊

Shungiku, aka garland chrysanthemum, is a super tender and succulent green with a slightly mustardy flavor.



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@bravenewseed

Shungiku

Companion Planting

What does this crop mean to you?

Shungiku, or chrysanthemum greens, is incredibly nutritious and easy to grow. I've seen it thrive fairly quickly in small spaces, so I see it as an important food in terms of community food security and sovereignty. It's a food that feels distinctly of spring, with a distinctly non-Western flavor profile. I see shungiku as an accessible crop for exploring and sharing my own ancestral food heritage.

What's important to know about growing this crop?

You can direct seed shungiku and keep it well watered until it's established. Then you can cut them like salad greens or transplant seedlings to grow larger, branch-like plants that you can harvest leaves from laterally. Shungiku will perennialize and overwinter in mild climates, but the leaves are no longer as succulent and delicious on older plants. You can also use the super bright and cheery yellow blossoms as cut flowers!



Shungiku and Chabo, a woodblock print by Japanese artist Kono Bairei, 1883.

"Crisp, young leaves are the best. I love them lightly cooked, in a delicious hot pot!"



Kkaennip

Jane O'Donnell

Goodie Farm

깨끗이

Jane O'Donnell runs an organic farm located in the rural town of Cherry Valley, California. With a deep connection to the land, she practices no-till and hand farming, nurturing the soil through regenerative practices while avoiding the use of pesticides. Her 6-acre farm is biodiverse, specializing in Asian varieties of crops. Goodie Farm plans crops strategically to provide amazing CSA boxes to local customers and fresh food to chefs as far out as Los Angeles. In addition to her dedication to the land and its crops, O'Donnell is committed to her community and has opened a farm shop to introduce people to regenerative agri practices and give them the opportunity to know their farmer and food producer. Jane pours her sweat, tears, and love into her farm and is passionate about continuing to grow and serve her community for years to come.

@goodiefarm



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Kkaennip Companion Planting

What does this crop mean to you?

Perilla, or kkaennip in Korean, is a special crop for me because it brings back so many childhood memories. Kkaennip ssam (rice and various Korean foods wrapped in a kkaennip leaf) was my favorite, and I think I ate it at least once a week. Ssam is a simple dish, but it brings so much joy. Every time I eat perilla, it takes me back to those moments with my grandmother, who raised me. I love sharing this experience with my children and explaining the origin of the seeds. I know where these seeds came from, and that connection to my heritage is so important to me.

What makes your preferred variety unique?

The colorful undertones of this plant are gorgeous, and it's one of my favorites to grow. Many people know shiso, but are unfamiliar with its cousin kkaennip. There are differences in the shape of the plant, the taste and the way they grow. I love introducing it to people for the first time.

What's important to know about growing this crop?

You need to know your hardiness zone and be aligned with the right conditions. It's good to start perilla as a transplant and to plant in a greenhouse when it's hot, but not in the dead heat of summer. Timing is everything. You can't control mother nature, but you can observe and pay attention to your plants and learn from your mistakes.





Baecheu

Madalyn Warren

East Branch Farms

Farmer Madalyn Warren has been fermenting kimchi with her family since she first started peeling garlic as a child. A fundamental part of Korean food, culture, and heritage, kimchi has been a vital part of the Warren family for as long as she can remember. In 2003, Madalyn moved to Roxbury, NY to farm and began making what she calls "farmstead kimchee" in large batches, sharing her love of this fermented Korean staple with friends and family. After moving a ways down Route 30 and starting East Branch Farms in 2013, Madalyn and her mother Ji Kim continued to refine their family techniques and recipes. They always use the freshest specialty vegetables, which contain high amounts of beneficial microbes, making them perfect for lacto-fermentation.

배추



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Baechu

Companion Planting

What does this crop mean to you?

If I don't grow enough napa, my Mom will cut my foot off. A good napa crop makes an excellent kimchee.

What makes your preferred variety unique?

I'm bad at keeping track of the different varieties. My philosophy at the farm is to embrace diversity, and I have been successful in growing a diverse range of crops, but it's challenging to keep track of all the different types.

What's important to know about growing this crop?

Napa cabbage grows like a sprinter. It wants uninterrupted growth. Currently, the fall crop is on its way. It was recently planted and covered with floating row cover to protect it from flea beetles. I use both direct seeding and transplanting methods. I don't irrigate, so my Spring crop of napa is usually grade B. Next spring, I'll plant all the napa near the greenhouse where I can access to water for drip lines. My goal is to produce grade A spring napa!





Kabatiti

Kanoa Dinwoodie
Feral Heart Farm

Kanoa (He/Him) has been farming since 2004, getting his start on a ranch in coastal California, just South of Half Moon Bay. There, he learned how to raise dairy goats and laying hens, how to prune, graft and propagate fruit trees, and how to cultivate a wide variety of annual and perennial vegetables and herbs, in both garden and field settings. He believes that seed stewardship is integral to farming's sustainability. He wants to create an abundant and healing environment for all, and he loves to help make the land laugh and sing with fruits, roots, flowers and leaves.

Kabatiti, luffa, 絲瓜,
へちま, mướp hương,
patola, तोरई, गिल्ली,
beerakaya, dodka,
ridge gourd



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feralheartfarm.com

Kabatiti

What does this crop mean to you?

My grandfather grew kabatiti on his farm in Hawaii. There is a distinct musky smell the leaves have that I would catch sometimes as a child, and I would be reminded of his farm and my mom's family's land. I did not know what that aroma was throughout my youth, until my dad began growing it in his garden. A favorite recipe my mom makes is pinakbet, an Ilocano dish containing kabatiti, eggplant, bitter melon, and tomatoes.

What's important to know about growing this crop?

Kabatiti likes hot weather and plenty of water. I start them indoors in mid to late spring and plant out with trellising when the soil has warmed up. Fruits should be picked young for food and the ridges peeled before slicing. Seeds are easily saved by allowing fruits to mature on the vine. They will cross with other luffas, including the bigger, bitter one. Their growth slows down with the cooler nights of fall and they die off with the first frost.

Companion Planting

What makes your preferred variety unique?

Kabatiti is a sweet luffa, and is smaller than the larger, bitter luffa usually grown for sponges. When cooked, they provide sweetness and their viscous juice adds to the body of the sauce. They're tender, while still retaining their shape.

The seed I have been growing comes from my dad, who has grown it for years in the San Joaquin Valley. I am now adapting it to the somewhat cooler inland East Bay of the San Francisco Bay Area.



pinakbet, a dish that uses kabatiti, eggplant, bitter melon and tomatoes



MALUNGGAY

Lorna Velasco
Sariwa Farm

Moringa, முருங்கை, सहजन,
ben oil tree, 辣木, marungay,
모링가, سوپانجنا کی کاشت

Sariwa Farm is a half-acre farm specializing in pesticide-free Filipino vegetables that's located in unceded Coast Salish territory in the Pacific Northwest. Lorna Velasco was born in the Philippines and moved to San Francisco when she was 11. She moved to Seattle in 2015, and she sees farming as a way of reconnecting with her Filipino heritage and laying down roots. She interned at Viva Farms, a farm incubator program in Skagit County, Washington. In 2017, she started Sariwa, which is named for the Tagalog word for "fresh."



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Malunggay

What does this crop mean to you?

I have fond memories of growing up with this crop. I'd hear my grandma yell for me to grab malunggay leaves for her from the backyard, and I'd run back there and bring the leaves to her, and she'd add them to her tinola, a delicious chicken ginger soup. In my neighborhood growing up in the Philippines, I felt like I could find it in the backyard of practically every other house. We would harvest the leaves all year round and use them in soups and stews like tinola, dinengdeng and munggo, and we'd also use them as medicine to help nursing mothers with lactation.

The fruits are the best! They're stick-like in shape, and we'd wait for them to emerge. Once they were as long as my arms, we would harvest them and cook them down in bagoong isda to make a vegetable stew flavored with fermented fish broth. The stalks are tough, but the fibrous fruits were hearty and delicious – you'd scrape the fruit against your teeth to get what was edible, then spit out the tough fibers. Now malunggay is considered a superfood (known by its scientific name, *moringa oleifera*) because it contains enough vitamin C, calcium, iron and potassium to rival that of oranges, milk, spinach and bananas.

What makes malunggay unique?

The malunggay tree is resilient and beautiful, just like my people. Their oval-shaped leaves cast beautiful shade. Under their gentle canopy, you will find kids and families seeking shelter from the midday sun, laying out on blankets made of banig, or palm fronds, and napping the hot afternoon away. Once malunggay trees are established, they are prolific, hearty and don't need much in terms of care.

What's important to know about growing this crop? They are divas as young saplings and hard to keep alive in the Pacific Northwest. They love the sun and the moisture, and their leaves will fall off if they don't get enough of both. The roots can stay alive and may grow a new set of leaves for the next season. They have a long and fragile taproot that is very difficult to transplant. It's best to direct seed malunggay, or prepare to lose 20-50% of your saplings when you transplant them from the greenhouse to the field. I have only grown them as bush plants, and I harvest them for their leaves. One day, once I have a fancy greenhouse, I would like to grow them into full trees.



Malunggay leaves have a bitter, grass-like flavor and add a bit of texture to dishes. They have a ton of vitamins, minerals and protein.



Long Beans

Julia Chang

Movement Ground Farm

长豇豆

Julia Chang (she/her) farms at Movement Ground Farm on the homelands of the Wampanoag Nation (Tiverton, RI). At MGF, Julia is the livestock coordinator and a member of the farm team, which grows culturally relevant crops for communities in Boston and Providence. Prior to farming Julia worked with refugee and immigrant youth in community gardens, schools, after-school programs, and organizing spaces. Her favorite farm tasks are bunching greens and moving sheep onto fresh pasture.



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@movementgroundfarm

Long Beans

Companion Planting

What does this crop mean to you?

Long beans (*vigna unguiculata sesquipedalis*) go by many names. I grew up knowing them as 江豆/jiang dou. We ate them dry-fried in a wok, Sichuan-style, with ground pork and chilies. Others know them as bodi, dau gok, or sitaw. The kidney-shaped seed, with a dark-colored eye, looks like a cousin of the black-eyed pea. In fact, they share a common ancestor -- the cowpea. Cowpeas were domesticated in Africa and made their way to Southeast Asia, carried on journeys unknown to us today. There, the long bean's genetics diverged from that of the cowpea via some combined process of natural and human-driven selection.

At Movement Ground Farm our farm crew is growing black-eyed peas, a landrace cowpea, and long beans alongside each other. All of these seeds have come to us via the distinct cultural traditions and migration stories of our ancestors. The significance of *vigna unguiculata* to our food traditions is a constant reminder to me that seeds travel and re-root with people. People and seeds evolve together. I love growing long beans for their versatility and wide resonance. While at Movement Ground Farm we harvest and distribute the pods, long beans can also be grown to produce dry grain and consumed as one would black-eyed peas. I have also heard of folks preparing the foliage like spinach, feeding plant matter as fodder to livestock, or using the crop as green manure to increase nitrogen in the soil.

What makes the variety of jiang dou you grow unique?

We initially bought seed for the Red Noodle variety from Kitazawa Seed Company and now use seed we saved from the previous season. The outer pods have an incredible reddish-purple color, while the seeds are chestnut colored with a dark brown eye. The taste is similar to green long beans, but any food cooked with them will be dyed a purplish color.

What's important to know about growing this crop?

Long beans will climb as high as whatever space you give them to grow. Last season, we trellised them to the top of our 16 foot high tunnel, harvesting what we could reach and leaving the highest pods to ripen and produce seed. I wouldn't recommend this strategy if you're going for the highest yield of edible pods because leaving fully ripened pods on the plant caused the production of new pods to slow. We direct seed our long beans after the last frost, when soil temperatures have warmed to around 65 degrees. We seed them 2-3" in the ground and 6" apart. Seeds usually emerge within 10 days, at which point we set up hortanova netting on stakes 6 feet apart to give them trellising support. Long beans produce pods within 80 days of planting. It's best to pick the pods when they are under 1.5 feet long. At this point the seed is immature, the beans still snap between your fingers, and the diameter of the pod is equivalent to that of a pencil. If the beans are allowed to grow longer than 1.5 feet, they become tough. To save seed, isolate at least 160 feet from other *vigna* crops. You can leave pods on the vine until they mature and dry, then thresh the pods.



Red Noodle long beans alongside yellow waxy beans



Korean Mint

Gaby Lee

Lunaria Flower Farm

Gaby Lee is a first-generation Chinese American farmer who was born and raised in the East Bay of northern California. She grows flowers related to Chinese medicine, Western herbalism and fresh and dried ornamentals using organic growing practices.

Lunaria Flower Farm is situated on the California coast in Pescadero, CA, on unceded Awaswas territory. The farm was created in winter of 2019 to provide high quality flower medicine to the Greater Bay Area community.

藿香 huò xiāng

배초향 Baechohyang



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@lunariaflowerfarm

Korean Mint Companion Planting

What does this crop mean to you?

Agastache rugosa, commonly referred to as Korean Mint, or in Chinese, huò xiāng, is a beautiful herbaceous flower that demonstrates how flowers can be used in many ways! Korean mint has a sweet, licorice-y, mint flavor. It can be eaten fresh or can be dried and brewed as a tea. There are many medicinal benefits. It is particularly useful for digestion and is a warming plant. In addition to its medicinal and food uses, the bright purple flowers can also be used in ornamental flower arrangements both fresh and dried.

What's important to know about growing this crop?

The stalks of Korean mint grow straight and upright. You can plant a few seeds next to each other as a cluster. The seeds are small and need light to germinate. Keep them on the surface of soil, and be attentive to keeping them moist until they germinate. The plants are perennial so they can live in your garden for years to come!



Sunset over Lunaria Flower Farm



Korean mint, *Agastache rugosa*