



Cooperative Extension Service  
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

## ***Amaranthus tricolor*<sup>1</sup>**

Edward F. Gilman, Teresa Howe<sup>2</sup>

### **Introduction**

This rapidly-growing annual is noted for its brilliantly-colored foliage, variegated in shades of red, green, or yellow (Fig. 1). Joseph's Coat will reach 1 to 4 feet in height and the beautiful leaves are 3 to 6 inches long and 2 to 4 inches wide. Joseph's Coat is ideal for edgings, borders, or mass plantings, where its vivid coloration will attract attention. It is one of the only annuals striking enough to be planted as a specimen.

### **General Information**

**Scientific name:** *Amaranthus tricolor*

**Pronunciation:** am-uh-RANTH-us TRY-kull-lur

**Common name(s):** Joseph's Coat Amaranth, Fountain Plant, Love-Lies-Bleeding

**Family:** *Amaranthaceae*

**Plant type:** annual

**USDA hardiness zones:** all zones (Fig. 2)

**Planting month for zone 7:** Jun

**Planting month for zone 8:** May

**Planting month for zone 9:** Apr

**Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** Dec; Jan; Feb

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** container or above-ground planter; specimen; border; accent

**Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

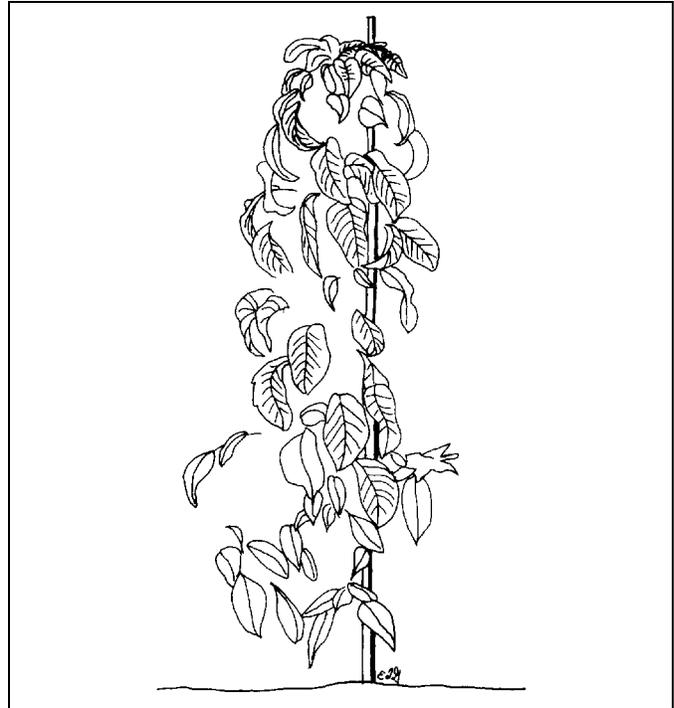


Figure 1. Joseph's Coat Amaranth.

**Spread:** 1 to 2 feet

**Plant habit:** upright

**Plant density:** moderate

**Growth rate:** fast

**Texture:** coarse

### **Description**

**Height:** 1 to 4 feet

### **Foliage**

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2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, Teresa Howe, coordinator - Research Programs/Services, Gulf Coast REC, Bradenton, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, 32611.

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** undulate

**Leaf shape:** ovate

**Leaf venation:** pinnate

**Leaf type and persistence:** not applicable

**Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches

**Leaf color:** yellow; purple or red; variegated

**Fall color:** not applicable

**Fall characteristic:** not applicable

**Flower**

**Flower color:** red

**Flower characteristic:** inconspicuous and not showy

**Fruit**

**Fruit shape:** no fruit

**Fruit length:** no fruit

**Fruit cover:** no fruit

**Fruit color:** not applicable

**Fruit characteristic:** inconspicuous and not showy

**Trunk and Branches**

**Trunk/bark/branches:** not applicable

**Current year stem/twig color:** reddish

**Current year stem/twig thickness:** very thick

**Culture**

**Light requirement:** plant grows in full sun

**Soil tolerances:** clay; sand; acidic; loam;

**Drought tolerance:** moderate

**Soil salt tolerances:** unknown

**Plant spacing:** 12 to 18 inches

**Other**

**Roots:** not applicable

**Winter interest:** not applicable

**Outstanding plant:** not particularly outstanding

**Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive

**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

## Use and Management

Plants should be placed in full sun for best leaf color but can tolerate partial shade in the hottest locations. Any well-drained soil is fine and plants are quite drought-tolerant. Joseph's Coat will perform best where they do not receive too much fertilizer since the leaves will lose their vibrant coloring when grown in very rich soils. Plants usually need staking to hold them upright.

Cultivars include 'Early Splendor', 'Flaming Fountain', and 'Molten Fire', 'Perfecta', 'Splendens', 'Tricolor' having various brilliant shades of yellow to red foliage. 'Green Thumb' and 'Pigmy Touch' are more compact and may not need staking.

A related plant called *A. hybridus* are considered useful for reducing tissue swelling and have a cleansing effect. It has also been used for diarrhea, ulcers and hemorrhaging.

Propagation is by seed which germinates readily.

### Pests and Diseases

None of major concern.