

## Succulents for dinner? Heat-tolerant 'sea beans' may become important food source as climate change accelerates

In southern Israel's stifling heat, rows of salicornia, commonly known as sea asparagus or sea beans, grow under translucent tarps, planted into ground more sand than soil, irrigated with saltwater. This environment would kill most plants, but these segmented succulents look beautiful — green and healthy. In partnership with researchers at Ben Gurion University of the Negev, local farmers are exporting them to markets in nearby countries.

Sea beans taste like salty cucumber and grow wild in coastal areas around the globe. But in recent years researchers have begun to focus on them for agriculture .... These researchers' efforts are defining what extremes the plant can withstand, its nutrient needs and how to get it to grow faster and with greater yield. As the planet warms and the seas rise, resilient crops such as sea beans might become climate saviors. But only if we are willing to eat them.

Climate change is already affecting our food supply. In [a paper published](#) [in 2019], researchers calculated that the available calories from the world's top 10 food crops were 1 percent less annually than they would have been without the impact of climate change.

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