PLANT FACT SHEET

Curcuma australasica Hook.f.

GENUS *Curcuma* **FAMILY** Zingiberaceae

COMMON NAMES Cape York lily, Aussie plume, Native Ginger, Native Turmeric

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Rhizome, Root

The roots are roasted and eaten.

DESCRIPTION

An evergreen ginger family herb. It re-grows each year from the underground fleshy rootstock. It grows to 0.5 m tall and spreads to 0.5 m wide. The stems are erect and flowering. The leaves are light green and large and like a spade. They are 25-70 cm long by 9-15 cm wide. They point upwards and are pleated and narrow towards the base. The leaves are thin textured. The stalk is fleshy and 20 cm long. The flowers are yellow with large bright pink bracts. They occur in clusters of 3-5 in the base of each bract. The lower flowers are green and fertile while the upper ones are pink and sterile. These flowers are in spikes 12-15 cm long. The fruit is a thin walled 3 celled capsule. The seeds are enclosed in papery bracts.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It prefers well drained soil in a protected heavily shaded position. They can grow in the sun. It needs a wet summer and a dry winter. It is drought and frost tender. It grows naturally in sandstone country on the fringe of monsoon forests near streams. It needs an alkaline pH. In the Cairns Botanical Gardens. It suits hardiness zones 8-12. Coffs Harbour Botanical Gardens.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown by division of the clump. They can also be grown from seed.

Harvesting and Seed Production

In Australia, plants flower in November to April and fruit in April.

NOTES

The plant has been used as a contraceptive. There are about 50 Curcuma species. They are mostly in SE Asia.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

REFERENCES

Beasley, J., 2011, Plants of Tropical North Queensland - the compact guide. Footloose publications. p 77

Bodkin, F., 1991, Encyclopedia Botanica. Cornstalk publishing, p 308

Brock, J., 1993, Native Plants of Northern Australia, Reed. p 131

Cherikoff V. & Isaacs, J., The Bush Food Handbook. How to gather, grow, process and cook Australian Wild Foods. Ti Tree Press, Australia p 151, 198

Cribb, A.B. & J.W., 1976, Wild Food in Australia, Fontana. p 148

Elliot, W.R., & Jones, D.L., 1984, Encyclopedia of Australian Plants suitable for cultivation. Vol 3. Lothian. p 135

Garde, M., et al, 2003, A Preliminary List of Kundedjnjenghmi Plant Names. Northern Land Council. (Arnhem Land, Australia)

Hibbert, M., 2002, The Aussie Plant Finder 2002, Florilegium. p 78

Jones D, L, 1986, Ornamental Rainforest Plants in Australia, Reed Books, p 267

Lazarides, M. & Hince, B., 1993, Handbook of Economic Plants of Australia, CSIRO. p 70

Lim, T. K., 2015, Edible Medicinal and Non Medicinal Plants. Volume 9, Modified Stems, Roots, Bulbs. Springer p 30

Lim, T. K., 2016, Edible Medicinal and Non-Medicinal Plants: Volume 12 Modified Stems, Roots p 6

Llamas, K.A., 2003, Tropical Flowering Plants. Timber Press. p 365

Low, T., 1992, Bush Tucker. Australia's Wild Food Harvest. Angus & Robertson. p 83

Morley, B.D., & Toelken, H.R., (Eds), 1983, Flowering Plants in Australia. Rigby. p 353

Nicholson, N & H., 1996, Australian Rainforest Plants 2, Terania Rainforest Publishing. NSW. p 21

Scarth-Johnson, V., 2000, National Treasures. Flowering Plants of Cooktown and Northern Australia. Vera Scarth-Johnson Gallery Association. Cooktown, Australia. p 169

Townsend, K., 1994, Across the Top. Gardening with Australian Plants in the tropics. Society for Growing Australian Plants, Townsville Branch Inc. p 150

PROVIDED BY **Food Plants International**

French, B.R. & Maynard, A.R. Food Plants International Database. Food Plants International

LICENCE CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

ONLINE FACT SHEET https://www.echocommunity.org/en/resources/5a49322c-d50b-49ea-badf-c7620f32cb98