

**Common names**

**Ensete,**

**Musaceae**

**Scientific name**

***Ensete ventricosum***

**Edible portion**

Leaves, Stem, Seeds, Corm, Flower heads, Rootstock, Rhizome, Vegetable,



**Description**

A banana like plant. It grows to 6-12 m high. The lower part of the leafy false stem is swollen. Many different varieties exist. The leaves are bright green with an obvious red midrib. The leaves can be 5 m long and 0.9 m wide. The flower is a very large hanging spike. It is 2-3 m long. The flowers are cream coloured. There is a single petal in a large red bract. The fruit resemble small bananas. They are 6-8 cm long and 3 cm thick. They have a yellow skin. The seeds are pea like and fill the fruit. The seeds are black and about 6 mm across. There are 50 cultivated types.

**Distribution**

It grows in tropical Africa. It does best with a temperature of 18-28°C and a relative humidity of 60-80 %. In Ethiopia it grows between 1500 and 3000 m altitude but does best between 1700 and 2450 m altitude. In Malawi it is usually on the edges of forests or in sheltered gullies. It is damaged by frost or drought. It can grow in arid places. In the Cairns Botanical Gardens. It suits hardiness zones 10-12.

**Found in:**

Africa, Angola, Asia, Australia, Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central Africa, Congo, East Africa, Ethiopia, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Myanmar, Pacific, Philippines, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, SE Asia, South Africa, Southern Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, West Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe,

**Use**

The fermented pulp (kocho) of the stem is eaten. It is used as a flour to make bread.

The leaf bases and fresh corms are cut up and boiled as a vegetable.

The milky white juice extract is allowed to ferment in pits lined with ensete leaves then cooked.

The young flowers are eaten as a relish.

The fruit are eaten only in times of food scarcity. It is the endosperm of the seeds that is eaten.

**Cultivation**

It can be grown by seed. It is normally grown by bud suckers or shoots. To get bud suckers a 4-6 year old plant is cut off at 20-30 cm height. The central bud (which would normally grow one shoot) is removed and the hole filled with soil. The corm is then replanted into a manured pit about 5 days later. After 4-8 weeks this produces 40-200 buds. These can be separated and grown in a nursery for one year before being transplanted into the field. These plants are normally then transplanted to wider spacing after 2 then 4 years. Plants reach harvest maturity in 6-7 years. Suckers can be used for transplanting and reach maturity in 2 years. The final spacing for bud suckers is 3 m x 1.5 m. Large amounts of organic manure are often applied. Plants are harvested before the onset of flowering.

**Production**

An average family cultivates 200-400 plants per year and they eat about 10-20 plants per person per year. In Ethiopia using 1600 plants per hectare at a spacing of 2.5 m gave about 5000 kg per hectare of refined product.



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## Nutritional Values

### *Ensete ventricosum*

Edible Part	/100 g edible portion	Moisture %	Energy KJ	Energy Kcal	Protein g	Provit A µg	Vit C mg	Iron mg	Zinc mg
Seed dry		12.4	1472	352	13.3				
Pith		56.3	715	171	1.2			5.3	



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