

Curcuma neilgherrensis Wight

Synonyms : *Curcuma angustifolia*

Family : Zingiberaceae

Parts Used : Rhizome

Vernacular Names

English : Wild arrow root

Malayalam : Vellakkoova, Kattumanjal

Hindi : Benhaldi

Sanskrit : Tavakshira

Bengali : Tikhur

Gujarathi : Tarakhara

Tamil : Kua

Telugu : Ararit gaddalu



Distribution and habitat: Herb, outer ranges of Himalaya

Botany: Stemless herb. Rootstock small, emitting long fleshy fibers terminating in pale oblong pendulous tubers.

• **Leaves:** 30-45 cm long; blade lanceolate, acute, 15-30 cm long.

• **Inflorescence:** Flowering spike lateral, apart from and usually appearing earlier than the leafy spike. Flowers yellow, longer than their bracts, 3 or 4 together in the axil of each bract opening in succession and quickly fading; Calyx 3-toothed. Corolla-tube 13 mm long, somewhat gibbous; upper lobe erect, concave, ovate, longer than the two lateral ones. Lateral staminodes oblong, united to the filament; the lower large, broad, spreading, notched; connective produced at the base in a fork.

• **Fruit:** Capsule ovoid, ultimately opening by 3 valves. Seeds many, small.

Properties: Demulcent

Uses: Used in bone fracture, swelling of body etc. Used in sub normal temperature after fever. It is used in Unani preparations like Zard corb and Zarambad etc. It is also used in burning sensations, loss of taste, stones in the kidney and bladder, diseases of blood.

Agro technology:

Soil and climate: It prefers loamy well drained fertile soil. Hot humid tropical climate with high rainfall more than 1500 mm are essential. The crop comes up well in open conditions, but it tolerates low levels of shade and therefore partially shaded situations can also be utilised for its cultivation.

Propagation: Rhizome.

Manuring: Apply cattle manure or compost as basal dose @ 30-40 t/ ha, spread over the beds and mix well. Apply NPK fertiliser @ 30:30:60 Kg/ha. Full dose of P and half dose of K may be applied 60 days after planting.

Plant protection: Shoot borer (*Dichocrocis punctiferalis*) cause damage to the crop. Appearance of 'dead heart' in the field is the main symptom. Pull out the dead hearts with the larvae inside and burn it. If infestation is severe, spray dimethoate or quinalphos at 0.05%.

Harvesting: In homesteads partial harvesting is the practice adopted to suit the family requirement for preparing chutney or for medicinal use. Drying of the leaves is the indication of harvesting time. From sixth month onwards harvesting can be done by lifting the entire plant with a spade and then cutting away the top portion. Roots and soil particles are removed from the rhizomes and it is advisable to dry the rhizomes under shade for one day before storage or transporting.

