

Ensete superbum W. Roxburgh

Synonyms : *Musa superba* W. Roxburgh

Family : Musaceae

Group : Diuretic/renal protectant

Parts Used : Seed, Fruit flesh

Vernacular Names

English : False banana, Rock banana

Malayalam : Kalluvazha, Malavazha,



Distribution and Habitat: Seen in moist deciduous and semi evergreen forests. This rare banana is indigenous to Northern India and the higher elevations of Thailand.

Parts used: fruit flesh, Seeds

Botany: Plant 300m-360m high and pseudostem 150m-180m tall, with an enormous swollen base of 210m-240m in circumference at the base, narrowed to 90cm below the leaves. The plant dies down to an underground corm in the dry season and forms new leaves at the beginning of the monsoon.

• **Leaves:** Bright green on sides, 150cm long, 45cm broad; free petiole very short, deeply channelled. The leaf sheaths are persistent at the base and leaves closely set scars on the corm.

• **Inflorescence:** Globose at first, 30cm in diameter, later drooping and elongating to one third the length of the trunk. The bracts are orbicular, dark brown- red (dull claret-brown), reaching 30cm in length and breadth and subtend dense biseriate rows each of 10-15 flowers. Ovary white, cylindrical, above an inch long. The outer Perianth is whitish, as long as the ovary and three-lobed or formed of three loosely coherent segments. The inner Perianth is shorter than the outer, tricuspidate with a long, linear central cusp.

• **Fruits:** Subcoriaceous , more or less triangular and contain numerous dark brown seeds.

• **Seeds:** Subglobose but angled by pressure, 1/3- 1/2 inches in diameter.

Properties: hypoglycaemic, renal protective, anti microbial

Chemical constituents: Seeds contain proanthocyanidin, pro-pelargonidin glucosides, pelargonidin, anigorufone, hydroxyanigorufone etc. Pseudostem of the plant was reported to contain a tetrahydro-β-carboline.

Uses: The flesh of the fruit is given to diabetics under ayurvedic practice. The ground seeds and peduncle are also used in Ayurveda for kidney stones, leucorrhoea. Pseudostem and pith used in appendicitis and food poisoning. Fruit is used as a remedy in jaundice, raising uterus. Sprouting of the plant is used as an indicator of monsoon.

Agro technology:

Propagation: Seeds

Harvesting: Each plant takes four to five years to mature, at which time a single fruit bunch of about 12-15 kg.



