

KUNYIT

Scientific name : *Curcuma domestica* Loir.
Common name : Tumeric
Local name : Kunyit
Family : Zingiberaceae



Introduction

Turmeric, the spice that gives the distinctive yellow color to many Malay and Indian curry dishes, has been used as dye, in folk medicine and flavoring since 600 BC. It has been recorded in the Assyrian herbal circa about 2500 years ago. The plant is considered as one of the most valuable herbs to mankind. To the traditional folk medicine of India, turmeric is considered as an excellent natural antibiotics while at the same time it is also used to strengthen digestion and help improve intestinal flora. The plant native to Southeast Asia and is currently cultivated commercially in China, India, Indochina and Indonesia.



Plant Description

Tumeric is a perennial herb, growing to a height of about 1 m. The leaves are borne in a tuft, alternately arrange, light green in color. The leaves are glabrous, elliptical lanceolate in shape with an entire margin. The petioles are rather long, ending into a broad leaf sheath, which act as a pseudostem. The rhizomes are aromatic, orange-brown in color on the outside and bright orange in the inside. The tubers are elliptical in shape, fleshy, white in color and grow vertically downwards.



Plant habit

In Malaysia, turmeric is normally cultivated in home gardens. Kunyit is propagated asexually through rhizome separation. Tumeric will grow well in mild shade but produces larger and better rhizomes when grown in open and exposed to full sunlight.

Plants parts used : Rhizomes

Uses in traditional medicine

The plant is used as an anti-inflammatory, antimalarial, antihelmintic, bactericide, fungicide, stimulant and for treating sprains, ringworms, scabies, neuralgia and rheumatism. It is also used

as an insect repellent. The dried tumeric rhizome is commonly used as a condiment and to prepare a yellow color dye. In Malaysia, tumeric is used as a cosmetic during traditional ceremonies. It is an important ingredient in local cooking, eg curry. Tumeric prepared with oil is used to smoothen rough skin, and with lime, it is used to treat bruises sprains and wounds. A decoction made from tumeric is used as a cooling eye-wash. Tumeric boiled with milk and sugar is a popular remedy for colds. When mixed with sesame oil and honey, it is used as a tonic. A poultice of the rhizomes is applied to the breast for stimulating milk flow.