

# Mango Ginger

## A Master Personator in the Plant Kingdom

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**M**ANGO and ginger are both familiar names to everyone. But have you ever heard of mango ginger? A master personator in the plant kingdom, mango ginger resembles ginger in appearance and has a rich, sweet flavour of raw mango. Due to its plant belonging to the ginger family Zingiberaceae, mango ginger resembles ginger due to its rhizomes being irregularly branched. However, this resemblance is only superficial. In fact, mango ginger corresponds to the same genus as turmeric (*Curcuma longa*). But, unlike the yellow colour of turmeric, mango ginger has a pale yellow core.

Mango ginger is a widely used spice in Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Java, Sri Lanka and India. In our country, its cultivation is mostly done in Gujarat, Odisha, West Bengal, Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and many North Eastern states.

The spice seems to have a long history in the country as it has a name in all the major Indian languages. It is known as Amada (literally meaning mango-like flavour) in Bengal. The origin of some names stems from their direct link with turmeric, like amragandhi haridra in Sanskrit, aam haldi in Hindi, ambe halad in Marathi, amba haldar in Gujarati and

huliarasina in Kannada. In other South Indian languages, it is referred to as manga inji in Malayalam, mankayinchi in Tamil and mamidi allam in Telugu. Other names of the spice include temu pauh in Malaysia, tema mangga in Indonesia and khamin khao in Thailand.

The plant of mango ginger is herbaceous and perennial, producing clumps of erect pseudostems 30-110 cm long from branched rhizomes. There are five to seven leaves with blades, which are 16-60 cm long and 7-16 cm wide, in each pseudostem.

A hot and humid tropical climate with high rainfall is usually preferred by mango ginger. Although it is found in open conditions, but it can tolerate low levels of shade as well. However, a partially shaded portion is best for its cultivation. Sandy loamy soil is best suited for mango ginger plantation, which is done in April. It is harvested seven to eight months later. However, in view of the scattered cultivation pattern of mango ginger, data availability is not there on its area, production and productivity.

The gorgeous spires of pink, purple or white/pale yellow flowers are produced by the amazing plant of mango ginger all summer long. Besides being a spice, it also serves as a