

The Ecotourism Society of Seychelles



*For the Community & by the Community
The Process...*

“Turning Possibilities into Realities”

2011 “WINNING FOR SEYCHELLES”

Tourism - Linking Cultures

Horticulture...Our Culture (part two)



Kot Man-Ya The Brand



Lying quietly on the hillside of Les Canelles, Anse Royale and close to the main road, is a man-made international Oasis of Rare Exotic Tropicals, where time appears to have stood still.

In such a fertile environment, where **organic is king**, we are privileged to be constantly surrounded by natural light, pure colours and varieties to the heart's delight.

A greater thrill is to know that these **beauties** are bringing happiness and joy to hundreds of people each day.

To plant a garden is to
believe in tomorrow.
- Audrey Hepburn

Conservation note

**Horticulture – Linking Cultures
Sharing of Knowledge**

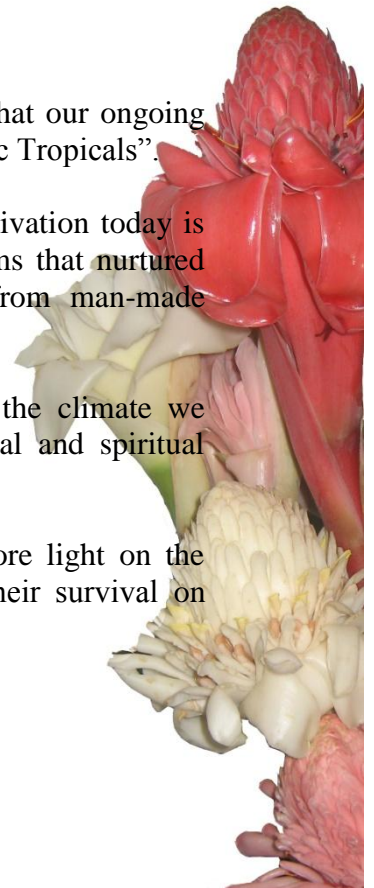
In our continuous quest to “Do it with flowers”, we are confident that our ongoing endeavours will continue to “spice up” our knowledge of “rare” Exotic Tropicals”.

It is now to be recognised that the number of tropical plants in cultivation today is only a fraction of those remaining in the wild, where the ecosystems that nurtured them for eons are disappearing at an alarming rate, resulting from man-made disasters.

Such large scale destruction is affecting the air that we breathe, the climate we experience, the vacation we may want and not the least our moral and spiritual convictions.

Through this process, therefore, we will be better able to shed more light on the colours, varieties and origins of such “gifts of life” in ensuring their survival on which our very own is so heavily dependent.

**Exotic Tropicals
The Learning Curve
A la découverte**



Flowering Ginger Plants

Ornamental ginger, a relative of culinary ginger, is grown for its long-lasting exotic flowers that come in a range of colors including white, pink and red. Some varieties of ornamental gingers are also fragrant.

Flowering ginger is a member of the Zingiberaceae family, a group of tropicals, herbaceous perennials that grow by rhizomes. They are indigenous to Southeast Asia, and plant production often occurs in Thailand and China.

Though the word **Ginger** confers up mental images of Oriental and Creole food, edible ginger is only one of approximately, 1400 species in the highly diverse family of Zingiberaceae. In contrast to Heliconia, Gingers are renowned for their irresistible perfumes, but as with heliconia the most conspicuous parts of each ginger flower are not petals but scale like or highly modified parts of the male reproductive system.

Instead of regular roots, ginger, like heliconia spread and are propagated by fat, knobby grand-level stems called rhizomes. When buying fresh so-called ginger roots at the market one actually receives a special stem.

Indeed many Asian spices, converted into items of trade and commerce since the days of Columbus are time-honoured specialities of ginger family. For example, Turmeric Powder is from a dried ginger rhizome.

We now have the pleasure of introducing an array of rhizome gingers, appealing to our senses, but this time to our visual and olfactory rather than taste, senses.



Alpinia Purpurata

Other names: Red ginger, ostrich plume, bottle brush.

Flowering gingers of the Alpinia species are widely available for home garden use. The plants grow 3 to 15 feet tall, depending on the variety.

Red ginger's showy spikes, composed of loose layers of cerise bracts are known to all in the Seychelles Islands.

Native to Western Pacific, red ginger has been transported by people to warm areas everywhere. True to its Island heritage, it is still a festive plant and very popular as cut flowers.

Red and pink gingers, make excellent hedges or garden dividers. When watered well and provided with plenty of nitrogen, they thrive in sun or shade, blooming all year round.

Other Purpurata varieties include "Tahitian ginger" Jungle King and Queen, and Eileen McDonald. Alpinia Purpurata White found in abundance in Trinidad...is now a "new kid on the block" in Seychelles.

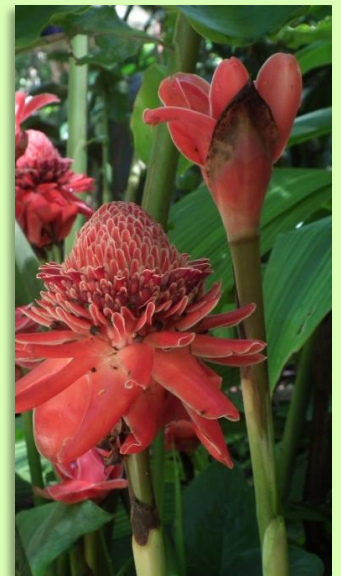
Torch Ginger - Rose de Porcelaine

Other names: Walking stick ginger, Nicolaia, Etlingera Elatior.

Majestically, the Torch Ginger thrust its large flower heads skywards on thick stalks. Each flower-head up to eight inches long in diameter and seemingly artificial in looks is composed of numbers layers of waxy, cerise grills, nearly margined in white.

One of its former names meant, **magnificent** and **pure light**. Floral scallops, overlapping like exotic pinecones are not petals but fancy leaves or bracts.

Arising directly from the ground, often up to eye level, torch gingers heavy blooms are dwarfed by their own enormous leaves. The true flowers are the yellow curly tongues which enlarge as the flower ages. Torch ginger comes in colours of white, Red and pink.



Alpinia Zerumbet

Other names: Shell ginger, porcelain ginger or lily.

Although associated with the tropics, shell ginger actually evolved in the high-elevation cloud forest of South East Asia. It tolerates heat and dryness better than most gingers. In its native countries, the fibrous leaf sheaths of shell ginger are converted into ropes.

Its foot-long floral necklaces arching gracefully from tall stems, resembles curved strands of pink- and- white porcelain shell. From beneath the waxy bracts emerge one or two bright Red or Golden flowers shape like frilly bells. From a distance the large leaves of shell ginger (five to 12 feet high) look untidy, if not well tendered.



Zingiber Spectabilis

Other names: Golden shampoo ginger, beehive, mustard and revolute.

Layers of golden, ridged, scallops, intricately moulded from waxy golden plant tissue, make up the beehive's flower-head. At any one time, two or three spotted orchid's flower out between its folds.

The golden beehive's yellow and pink pigments absorb ultra-violet light, attracting bees to pollinate each peculiar flower. How appropriate that its scientific name means **remarkable ginger**.

Native to Malaysia, this six-foot-long newcomer to the floral trade is like its wild relative, quite aggressive as the prolific clumps of flower-heads attest.

Recently adventitious botanist has discovered new species, in Borneo, India and Thailand. Remember that gingers, not as dependent on light as Heliconias, will grow in shady nooks and crannies if given room.

Tapeinochilos Ananassae

Other names: Indonesian wax ginger, giant spiral ginger, pineapple ginger.

Another fanciful species, the Indonesian Wax is characterised by a pine-cone like flower-head composed of over a dozen layers of crisp; pointed tongues arranged in continuous circles. Its colours are vibrant, yellowish-red on the inside merging into rusty red on the outside.

The entire flower-head from four to over 12 inches long each, emerges from ground level on a remarkable short stalk and is now quite a common component of modern arrangements. As if they have been sprayed with clear polyurethane, they look like clones of bizarre, multi tongued creatures, clustered beneath 15 foot-high columns of twisted bamboo.



Red Snake Ginger

Other names: Cobra, snake, stenophyllus

Bright reptilian flower-head, looming directly from ground level, mimic a tropical snake complete with overlapping "scales" and the standard warning colours of red and yellow.

Never fear, for it's harmless.

Cobra ginger provides a sure topic of conversation as it lurks behind the scene both in its natural environment or in modern contemporary arrangements.

Stenophyllus implies narrow leaves, and its spiralling bamboo like leaves are rather narrow. A native of Costa Rica, Red Snake does not require intense light, growing well in shady spots where heliconia "the flower of the Gods" do not have a chance.

Our next issue on Musa, the bananas and plantains will be another added plus in this direction.