

Black Turmeric (*Curcuma caesia* Roxb): A High Value Medicinal Herb

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Introduction

Black Turmeric (*Curcuma caesia* Roxb) is an important herb which possesses lot of medicinal value. *Curcuma caesia*, is a lesser explored herb which belongs to the family zingiberaceae. Black turmeric which is autochthonous to North Eastern and Central India, most commonly found in West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. Black turmeric has been used in ancient medicine. Albeit practiced in ancient medicine black turmeric (*Curcuma caesia* Roxb) is gaining popularity in recent times due to the shift in the people from synthetic medicine to ayurvedic medicine. The rhizome of black turmeric is said to bear bitter taste, antifungal and anti-bacterial properties. The rhizome of *Curcuma caesia* affirm medicinal value which is claimed to treat piles, asthma, tumors. This untouched herb has been listed as endangered by central forest department of India.

Taxonomical Hierarchy

| | |
|-------------|----------------------|
| Kingdom: | Plantae |
| Subkingdom: | Viridaplantae |
| Phylum: | Tracheophyta Sinnott |
| Subphylum: | Euphyllophytina |
| Class: | Magnoliopsida |
| Order: | Zingiberales |
| Family: | Zingiberaceae |

Subfamily: Zingiberoideae

Tribe: Hedychieae

Genus: Curcuma

Species: *C. caesia* Roxb

Vernacular Names

Different names of *C. caesia*

Hindi: Kali Haldi

Bengali: Kala Haldi

Manipuri: YaingangAmuba or Yaimu

Marathi: Kala-halad

Kannada: Kariarishina, NaruKachora

Telugu: Nalla Pasupu

Assamese: Kala Haladhi

Nepalese: KaaloHaledo

Morphology of the plant

Rhizome

Black turmeric (*Curcuma caesia* Roxb) is erect, rhizome herb grows up to 1.0 to 1.5m high. The rhizome is oval in size, but not as thick other *curcuma* species, it has camphoraceous sweet odour. The shape and size vary from plant to plant. The surface of the rhizome is dark brown, blueish black in color.

Root

The rhizome of the plant is not developed during propagation. Black turmeric has yellow brown long fibrous and tapering adventitious roots all over the surface of rhizome.

Leaf

Leaves of the *C. caesia* are about 25- 50 cm long and 15cm broad and oval shaped with reddish color on edges. *C. caesia* are generally 10-20 grouped. The variation of leaves are parallel, typical characteristics of monocots.

Flower

Flowers of black turmeric (*Curcuma caesia* Roxb) is pale yellow in color, reddish at the outer border and shorter than their bracts. Flowers generally bloom in the month of June or July.

Constituents

The medicinal value present in the black turmeric (*Curcuma caesia* Roxb) is mainly due to its natural constituents. Black turmeric exhibited the presence of alkaloids, amino acids, carbohydrates, flavonoids, flavones, steroids, proteins. It has been reported that the dried rhizome of black turmeric contains about 1.6% of essential oils, this essential oil contains lot of therapeutic values.

Medicinal uses

- The black turmeric (*Curcuma caesia*) is said to be composed of high percentage of curcumin compared to any other *curcuma* species.
- Rhizome of *C. caesia* is used as a medicine to treat wounds and cuts and has a quick healing effect.
- Curcumin present in the roots of black turmeric contains anti-tumor, anti-oxidant, anti-amyloid and anti-inflammatory properties.
- Consumption of small amount of black turmeric paste is claimed to drum out gases from stomach and also helps to cure dysentery.
- People who suffer from asthma can be treated with black turmeric (*C. caesia*) rhizome.
- Like common turmeric black turmeric induce quick healing against snake bite.
- Rhizome and the leaves are used as a tonic for the brain and the heart.
- Black turmeric powder is used to cure toothache.

- Black turmeric (*C.caesia*) helps in easy digestion and succor in proper functioning of stomach and kidney.

Conclusion:

Thus, it has been concluded that black turmeric possesses lots of medicinal properties and these herbal products can be as effective as modern synthetic medicine. The rhizome of this plant contains bioactive properties which can be used to treat piles, asthma and epilepsy. Hence this review supports that black turmeric (*Curcuma caesia* Roxb) is a high value medicinal herb.

Reference

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