

Healing power of Taro



The most common name for this edible plant is taro. This taro, however, is somewhat larger than the usual taro on tropical markets, and certainly much larger than the Chinese Tajar, or taro.

In India this plant is called taro, Elephant-ear, Coco-yam, Chembu and Eddoe. However, Elephant-ear and Coco-yam are names used for

other colocasia species as well. There are two species that grow very large leaves. These leaves can be 1 to 2 meters in diameter.

In West Papua they say “keladi” against this plant. In Bangla Desh the plant is called Kochu. In some European garden centers the plant is sold for ornamental use, for instance in the Netherlands it is called “Olifantsoor “. In most countries it is not an ornamental plant but a food plant. It is grown in 135 countries as a food source.

A food source for 10,000 years

Colocasia esculenta is one of humanity’s oldest cultivated food crops. In Asia, evidence has been found that elephant ear was cultivated 10,000 years ago for its edible tubers.

Colocasia esculenta has a beautiful yellow flower and fruit, but these are considered rare. There are about 2 to 5 seeds in a fruit. The plant can also expand under the ground, via its root system. It likes a wide variety of soil types, but most of moist soil.

Edible tubers and young leaves

The carbohydrate-rich tubers are the most important reason to grow this crop. It is grown for nutrition. The tubers contain many tannins, flavonoids, steroids, alkaloids, healthy fats, and especially proteins and carbohydrates.

The leaves of some taro species are eaten, but not of elephant ear. However, the leaves of elephant ear can be eaten safely when they are young. The young stems are also edible.

Leaves and stems contain a lot of calcium, phosphorus, iron, folic acid, beta-carotene, vitamin C, and the vitamins B1, B2, B3, also called thiamine, riboflavin and niacin, respectively. The young leaves can serve not only as food but also as medicine. In addition to minerals and vitamins, they contain phenols, saponins, quinine, and glycosides. Many of these phytonutrients offer antioxidant effects, like vitamins and minerals.

Traditional means for snake bites

The leaf of the *Colocasia esculenta* is traditionally used as a medicine in poisonings, such as food poisoning, poison by a snake bite or poison by a scorpion sting. The leaves are used as leaf sap. In the case of food poisoning, the leaf juice is drunk. In scorpion stings and snake bites the leaf sap is applied on the wounds.

Other traditional applications are the use of the leaf as a wound herb. In addition, the rare fruits appearing in Bangla Desh are prescribed for people with liver problems.

Other traditional uses of the root are against: asthma, arthritis, diarrhea, internal hemorrhoids, nervous system disorders and various skin problems.

Antibacterial effect colocasia esculenta

Antibacterial actions of plants have been studied accurately, extensively and on a large scale since the beginning of the 21st century. The scientists do this because they recognize that synthetic antibiotics cause various medical problems. First, there is the resistance of bacteria to synthetic antibiotics. That is a serious problem, especially if you know that this resistance means that the bacteria use synthetic antibiotic as food, and therefore become stronger and expand their colony. Resistance in this case means: use the substance with which they want to kill you, as meal. Bacteria can be tough guys.

In addition, bacilli pass on the new resistant DNA information to other species. In this way, many bacteria are multi-resistant. That is to say, they thrive just fine on a dose of synthetic antibiotics and can make the patient sick or even dead. Consider also the MRSA bacterium which tends to kill people in hospitals. In most hospitals they use antibiotics to wipe the floor, so that is why they call MRSA the hospital bacteria. It is eating from the floor of hospitals.

For this and a few more reasons, scientists are researching plant antibiotics. The advantage of this is that there has never been a bacteria that became resistant to a natural, unmodified antibiotic. Another big advantage for the patient is that plant antibiotics have no bad side effects for humans. It has no adverse effects on the microbiome, our intestinal flora. Often, there are even positive side effects like: sometimes two diseases or disorders are solved at once.

Scientific research shows that leaf extract of *colocasia esculenta* has antibacterial activity. There have been several studies that have each investigated the antibacterial activity against one or two bacteria. The following pathogenic bacilli can be controlled by the leaf extract of the elephant ear: *Helicobacter pylori*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Staphylococcus Epidermis*, *Bacillus cereus*, *Streptococcus fecalis*, *Salmonella typhi*, *Klebsiella pneumonia*, *Pseudomona aeruginosa*, *Bacillus subtilis*, *Proteus vulgaris*, and *Escheria coli*. Researchers see that a leaf extract of *colocasia esculenta* can be used in typhoid, pneumonia, otitis, urinary tract infections and diarrhea.

Liver protection leaf extract colocasia esculenta

In a study in which livers of rats were poisoned with paracetamol also known as **acetaminophen** or **APAP**, it appeared that the liver poisoning that had occurred was restored more quickly when the rats were given an extract of the leaves of *colocasia esculenta*. Poisoning the liver by paracetamol is a standard method in science to investigate whether a medicinal plant provides liver protection. All important liver functions decrease due to the poisoning after the administration of the synthetic medicine acetaminophen.

Colocasia esculenta indeed appears to have liver protective effect, or hepatoprotective effect. In another study, paracetamol is used to create many free radicals in the body of rats. Free radicals are the underlying cause of many diseases and paracetamol use promote the growth of free radicals in the body. It turns out that the free radicals are cleared from the body, when a leaf extract of colocasia esculenta is taken. It is the free radicals that cause liver damage and other body problems. Scientists now see types of diseases that are caused by free radicals, such as diabetes, obesity, cancer, and cardiovascular diseases, can be prevented by eating food, supplements and medicinal plants that can eliminate free radicals. The most important substances that capture and eliminate free radicals are antioxidants. In addition to antioxidants from fruit and vegetables, there are antioxidants that are produced by the liver. These body's own antioxidants work even more effectively as antioxidants from fruit and vegetables. The antioxidants formed by the human body are sometimes named as "super-antioxidants". Some plants, mostly fruits, veggies and herbs, stimulate the liver to produce these superior type of antioxidant.

Leaf extract colocasia esculenta against diabetes

Research shows that a leaf extract of colocasia esculenta prevents diabetes. It works similar to the agent metformin, except that this drug has many side effects and the leaf extract does not.

metformin is that this organ needs people with the long run, people to the diabetic process. them out

Leaf extract of is able to regulate

Because it strengthens likely that the liver will take

of the pancreas gland. The liver will also produce all kinds of enzymes when it comes into contact with medicinal vegetables. This makes the liver stronger so it is more able to cope with antioxidants and other pathogenic substances. If the liver of a diabetes patient is not strengthened, then the disease diabetes degenerates the body further.



An important side effect of it affects the liver, while to be stimulated in diabetes. In fact, in metformin causes get deeper into degenerative Plants can pull of the pit again. colocasia esculenta blood sugar levels.

the liver, it is much more over the role of insulin production

Bananas and taro

Other diabetes research shows that immature tubers of colocasia esculenta and unripe banana together provide an anti-diabetes effect. Rats were given a meal based on flour from unripe bananas and unripe taro tubers. These had a lot of effect on the mice. So the weight decreased enormously. A number of parameters also changed rapidly. It appears that rats showed a better cholesterol profile when eating unripe bananas and taro tubers. What the researchers also noticed, is that the blood sugar level is better regulated by banana or taro as an individual than as a combined addition. However, the combination of taro tubers and unripe bananas do provide a good blood sugar leveling effect, albeit a little less than if one of the two plants was used individually. The Nigerian researchers who conducted this research, write in the

introduction, that many diabetes drugs are expensive and the side effects of this is that they put an heavy financial weight for the health system. That is one of the reasons why people look for other ways to treat diabetes, without expensive synthetic medication.

Anticancer effect colocasia esculenta

Various scientific studies show that colocasia esculenta promotes anticancer activity. Korean researchers notice that the plant has polysaccharides that can prevent cancer metastasis. Furthermore, the polysaccharides inhibit tumor growth. The research group is currently working on follow-up research. In their studies they saw that mice had much fewer tumors when treated with a component of colocasia esculenta. The aim is to study whether this knowledge is applicable to people.



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