For further information

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Oroxylum indicum
(Palakapayyani)

Kerala Forests and Wildlife Department
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Oroxylum indicum (L.) Benth. ex Kurz
Bignoniaceae

Common name(s) - ‘Palakapayyani’ / Indian trumpet flower

Habit - Medium-sized tree seen in dry and moist deciduous forests. The tree has a superficial root system and produces root suckers in large numbers. The compound leaves are 90-180 cm long, 2-3 pinnate, with soft cylindrical rachis swollen at the joints. Flowers numerous reddish purple outside, dull or pale pinkish yellow within, in large erect racemes. Fruit, a long pod, flat and sword-like contains many winged seeds.

Distribution - Found throughout India.

Parts used - Roots, leaves and fruits.

Major uses - It is used in traditional Indian ayurvedic medicine. The root bark is administered as an astringent. It is one of the constituents of the renowned tonic ‘Chyawanprash’.

Flowering - July to September

Seed collection - September to December

Method of collection - Pods are collected from the trees using long poles when they are brown in color and still unopened. Care should be taken to see that the winged seeds are not lost during collection.

Seed extraction - Seeds are extracted by drying the pods in open sun. To prevent the light winged seeds being flown away by the wind, the pods are to be covered with a soft cloth.

Seed storage - As the seeds quickly lose viability, fresh seeds are to be sown for germination soon after collection.

Propagation - Through seeds

Pre-sowing treatment - Soak the seeds for 12 hours in water

Nursery technique - Seeds are sown during March/ April. After sowing, the seeds are covered with a thin layer of soil. The beds are watered twice daily and provided with shade. Germination commences from the 10th day of sowing and will be complete by the 18th day.

Planting technique - Six-month-old poly-potted seedlings are used for field planting. Planting is done during the pre-monsoon showers in pits of size 30 x 30 x 30cm at a spacing of 4 x 4 m. The seedlings need protection from fire and grazing animals. Weeding boosts up initial growth.

Harvesting method - Harvesting of roots can be done by excavating roots after the establishment of the plant and preferably after ten years of planting. While harvesting, only a portion of the root system from one side of the tree is extracted at a time without causing damage to the tree.

Annual consumption - 150 to 200 tonnes