

RENEALMIA ALPINIA SAMPLE ENTRY (Provisional)

Renealmia alpinia (Rottb.) Maas (*Alpinia exaltata* (L.f.) Roem. & Schult., *Amomum alpinia* Rottb., *R. exaltata* L.f) - *Ink bush*, *Ink berry*, *Big warakaba food* (Guyanese Creole), *Masoesa/Masusa*, (Suriname), *Kumpia* (Shuar), *Ixquihit* (Mexico). Stout, perennial, aromatic, rhizomatous herb; may reach 18 ft. in height. Found in humid secondary forests, banks of rivers, and abandoned fields of Central America, the Caribbean and South America. Cultivated at times in Mexico, Suriname and Ecuador.



PARTS USED

FRUIT (Capsule) - Oval fruits, 1 1/4 inches long by 3/4 inch wide; rind thick and fleshy, red, turning violet-black after ripening, opening along seams into 3 parts; **ARIL** - pulp yellow-orange, oily, threadlike; **SEEDS** - numerous, brown, about 4 mm long.



LEAF - Simple, elliptic, undulate leaves, pointed at each end, about 5 1/2 inches wide and up to 3 ft. in length; midrib and margins occasionally red; alternate on the stem.



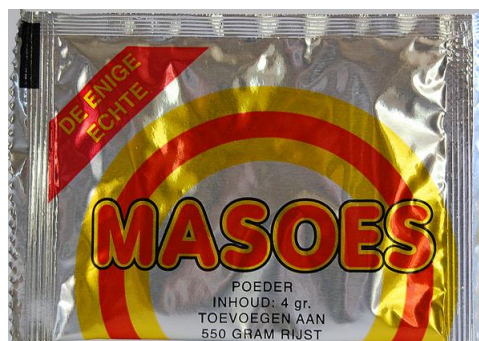
USAGE AND PRODUCTS

FRUIT - Flavoring, Food Dye, Oil: The seeds are separated from the pulp which is then added to foods to give flavor and a yellow color, in the manor of saffron and turmeric, especially to a dish known as *masoesa rice* in Suriname. In Mexico, the creamy pulp is seasoned before being eaten with traditional corn tortillas and, in Ecuador, it's added to soups and *tonga*. An oil is extracted from the seeds which is reportedly used for frying in Suriname.

FEATURED PRODUCTS

Masoesa Poeder - Traditionally, *masoesa rice* is prepared by boiling rice in a yellow liquid obtained from the soaked and sieved pulp. The closest authentic commercial product is made from a mixture of the dried powdered aril, dextrose, spices and MSG. When making *maoesa rice* with the powder, two to four grams are added to the other principal ingredients which include chicken, shrimp, salt meat, cabbage, onion, tomatoes and rice.

Masoesa-Alesie Trafasie - Another commercial product, a sauce that also includes herbs, spices, salt, onions and starch, substitutes passion fruit extract for masoesa pulp. Recipes for making *masoesa rice* with Masoesa-Alesie Trafasie often also call for Madam Jeanette Trafasie, a hot sauce made from the native 'Madam Jeanette' chile pepper, a cultivar of *Capsicum chinense* Jacq.



Note: The pulp is an important Non-Timber Forest Product in Suriname and is often

exported to the Netherlands.

LEAF - *Food Wrapper*: The leaves are used for wrapping foods in Mexico and Ecuador, imparting a distinctive, spicy flavor. In Sierra Norte de Puebla, Mexico, they are wrapped around tamales and empanadas made with various fillings. In southern Ecuador, a dish known as *tonga* is prepared by rolling the leaves around a mixture of meat, fish and vegetables, adding masoesa pulp, then roasting over an open fire.

FURTHER READING

Non-Timber Forest Products of the North-West District of Guyana. Part II: A Field Guide - Tinde van Andel; Wild Edible Plants of Southern Ecuador - Veerle Van den Eynden; Mansfeld's Encyclopedia of Agricultural and Horticultural Crops - P. Hanelt; Flora of Suriname - A.L. Stoffers. Flora Neotropica, Monograph No. 18: Renealmia - P.J.M. Maas; Renealmia alpinia (Rottb.) Maas (Zingiberaceae): Planta Comestible de la Sierra Norte de Puebla (Mexico) - Manuel J. Macia, 2003, *Anales Jard. Bot. Madrid* 60 (1): 183-187. Edible Palms of Southern Ecuador - Veerle Van den Eynden.