
Edible Tubers Used By the Kani Tribes of Amboori in The Thiruvananthapuram District

P B Smitha¹ and J. Lohidas²

¹Department of Botany, Scott Christian College (Autonomous) Nagercoil-629003 Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Abishekapatti, Tirunelveli-627 012 Tamil Nadu, India, E-mail: smithapb0106@gmail.com

²Associate professor, Scott Christian College (Autonomous) Nagercoil -629003 Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Abishekapatti, Tirunelveli-627 012, Tamil Nadu, India Email: lohiscott@gmail.com

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.16793504>

ARTICLE DETAILS

Research Paper

Accepted: 21-07-2025

Published: 10-08-2025

Keywords:

ABSTRACT

Throughout the world, pastoral and ethnic cultures rely heavily on wild edible tubers as part of their healthy practices. In daily life, wild edible tubers provide a supply of nutrition. Because of their high nutritional content, these wild tubers can be used as an additional food source in hilly areas, and it is urged to preserve and increase their inheritable diversity. Additionally, because it only consumes organic coprolites like ash, gruel water, cow dung etc., it has no negative effects on the body. Proteins, lipids, and carbohydrates made up the majority of the diet. In many developing nations, millions of people lack one or more nutrients and do not eat enough to meet their daily needs (FAO, 2004). Identification and attestation of wild edible tubers used by the Kani tribal people of Amboori, Thiruvananthapuram district, are part of the study.

INTRODUCTION

The long tradition of edible tubers, a priceless gift from nature to the ethnic communities, is what distinguishes the Amboori Kani tribes. Since the ethnic people gather edible tubers for both their own consumption and trade, it's a greater source of income for them. Wild shops are used as sources of food



and other necessities in poor nations, providing mortal creatures with a suitable level of nourishment (Aberoumand and Deokule, 2010). In addition to providing the body with protein energy, these plants are an essential part of the human diet, giving it vitamins, minerals, and certain hormone precursors (Akubugwo *et al.*, 2007). Mountain timbers are home to a wide variety of wild edible tubers, which are a valuable food source. Ethnic communities' healthy practices are typically based on their customs, knowledge, and seasonal financial resources. Ethnic cultures employ a variety of wild edible tubers, which are excellent sources of minerals and proteins (Oommachan & Masih, 1988).

The majority of ethnic groups in India's pastoral regions rely on wild resources to provide for their food and other needs. Wild edible plants are provided by Amboori tribes. Tribals eat a lot of its fruits, tubers, leaves, seeds, roots, outgrowths, toddy, etc., and they have both nutritional and therapeutic benefits. For food, clothing, shelter, and drugs, ethnic societies have relied heavily on nature, either directly or indirectly. Our agrarian practices have improved as a result of the advancement of technology and traditional knowledge, and today, traditional knowledge is helpful in creating new food sources. Ethnic people get their food and income from eating wild, appetizing foods, which is considered a healthy diet. The goal of this project is to learn about the Kani tribes' traditional knowledge of tubers.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Amboori is a panchayat located in Kerala, India's Thiruvananthapuram district's Kattakkada taluk. It is located 38 kilometers southeast of Thiruvananthapuram, the capital megacity. The Shower lineage, which has about 1200 individuals, is a significant ethnic minority in the area. The Ayurvedic author, Sage Agastya, is said to have built his vihara on the pinnacle of Agastya Mountain, 40 kilometers from Amboori. Amboori, surrounded by hills, is located close to Kattakkada in the southernmost tip of the Western Ghats. Tamil Nadu is the state southeast of Amboori. Neyyar Wildlife Sanctuary and thick timbers cover the eastern portion. Although Amboori is renowned for its high-yielding rubber colonies, the area also produces coconut, pepper, sauces, tubers, and medical shops. The Neyyar Wildlife Sanctuary is adjacent to Amboori and is divided from the residential area by the Neyyar Reservoir's catchment region. Information on their operation was gathered through interviews and surveys with a scientific framework, as well as through trade with snitchers. The purpose of this study is to determine the importance of tubers and the species that tribal people prefer. Regarding attestation, many field checks were carried out in Amboori's ethnic townlets in 2022–2023. Thiruvananthapuram district, selecting a different season to visit these ethnic homes in timber townlets and gathering information by speaking with elders, other original snitchers, and village chief Muthu Kani Moorpan. They provided



helpful information, such as how wild edible tubers are used and function. Questionnaires were used to conduct repeated interviews in several townlets in order to gather data. For taxonomic identification and unborn research, factory samples were gathered and stored in the herbarium. Using Gamble's "The Presidency of Madras," photographs were obtained from that location, and flowers were compared to Gamble and the species. The distinct families, which are arranged in successional order, are responsible for the wild tubers that the ethnic peoples consume as food. The rubrics are also organized alphabetically under each family. The information is then provided in the order listed below. Family, original name, corridor used, mode of operation, and binomial name.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

The present investigation verified the wild comestible tubers used by the Kani lines in the Amboori accords of Thiruvananthapuram quarter. A total of 13 tubers from 8 families were identified (Table 1). For each species in figure 3, the major families are Dioscoreaceae (6), Araceae (1), Liliaceae (1), Costaceae (1), Hypoxidaceae (1), Cyperaceae (1), Nelumbonaceae (1), and Papilionaceae (1). The majority of the tubers are represented in Figure 4 as Climbers (54%), Herbs (38%), and Creepers (8%). Significantly, gathering and cooking wild tubers is a daily activity for many ethnic households in ethnically diverse settings. Although they should require energy, women and children perform the majority of the work in gathering wild shops. On the journey to the timbers, a lot of food is gathered. Gathering of wild foods Further down, from the grange sheep to the timbers, women will enter. It has been observed that the custom of collecting food stores is rapidly dwindling. The younger generation's lack of interest in learning from the elders about chops is the cause. Even so, certain people of the maternal generation, both macho and womanly, are genuinely educated about wild tubers, and they still favor this cuisine over what they initially requested. This is also the cause of the state's declining traditional knowledge of wild tuber collecting and use. In the Malayalam months of Vrichikam and Dhanu, tubers are harvested, whereas in the month of Kumbha, they are sown. Currently, wild gormandizers are hovering above the tuber crops.

CONCLUSION

The ethnic group places a great deal of importance on tuber crops. In many of the corridors of Thiruvananthapuram quarter, wild tuberous businesses contribute significantly to the food security of the ethnic people by serving as common ménage food and pharmaceuticals. They consume raw, cooked, and lit tubers. Nevertheless, they are free of diseases like diabetes, hypertension, and high cholesterol. However, those of us who utilize these effects less frequently do not make the conditions better. That is



the distinction between wood life and civic life. Although growing tubers is possible in most parts of Kerala, we are not considering the possibility.

Acknowledgments

We would want to take this opportunity to thank the Amboori Kani tribes and the principal of Scott Christian College (Autonomous) in Nagercoil, Tamil Nadu, for all of the facilities and assistance.

Disclosure

The authors declare no existing competing interest.

REFERENCES

- Aberoumand, A. and Deokule, S.S. (2010). Preliminary studies on proximate and mineral composition of marchubeh stem (*Asparagus officinalis*) vegetable consumed in the Behbahan of Iran. *World Appl Sci J.*, 9: 127-130.
- Akubugwo, I.E.; Obasi, A.N. and Ginika, S.C. (2007). Nutritional potential of the leaves and seeds of black nightshade *Solanum nigrum* L. Var *virginicum* from afikpo-Nigera. *Pak J Nutr.*, 6: 323-326.
- Ogle, B.M.; Tuyet, H.T.; Duyet, H.N. and Xuan Dung, N.N. (2003). Food feed or medicine: the multiple functions of edible wild plants in Vietnam. *Econ Bot.* 57: 103- 117.
- Oommachan, M. and Masih, S.K. (1988). Multifarious uses of plants by the forest Tribals of Madhya Pradesh: Wild edible plants. *Journal of Tropical forestry.* 4: 163- 169.

Edible tubers used by Amboori tribes [Table 1]

Botanical name	Family	Local name	Habitat	Part used	Food value	Ethnobotanical uses
<i>Amorphophallus paeniifolius</i> (Roxb.) Bl.	Araceae	Kaattu chena	Herb	Tuber	Edible	After being kept under flowing water, the sliced tuber was cooked and consumed.

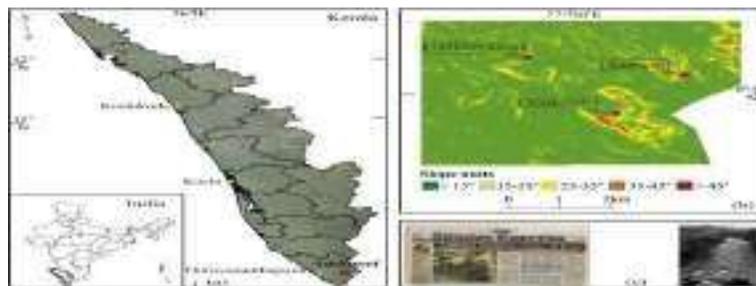


<i>Asparagus racemosus</i> Willd.	Liliaceae	Satawari	Creeper	Tuber	Edible	For three days, two spoonfuls of crushed tubers with turmeric (<i>Curcuma longa</i>) and the filtrate were given twice daily to treat stomach and chest pain.
<i>Costus speciosus</i> (Koenig) Sm.	Costaceae	Channa koova	Herb	Tuber	Edible	Tuber extract was administered for gastric trouble - 2 spoonful once a day for 5 days.
<i>Curculigo orchioides</i> Gaertn.	Hypoxidaceae	Nilappana	Herb	Tuber	Edible	For dysentery, raw tuber is consumed.
<i>Cyperus rotundus</i> L.	Cyperaceae	Muthanga	Herb	Tuber	Edible	Powdered crushed tuber eaten orally as a tonic.
<i>Dioscorea bulbifera</i> L..	Dioscoreaceae	Kaattu kaachil	Climber	Tuber	Edible	After being sliced and left in running water for a day, the tubers were boiled, twice-filtered, cooked with tamarind juice (<i>Tamarindus indica</i>), and then consumed. For arthritis, tuber powder is administered orally.
<i>Dioscorea hispida</i> Dennst.	Dioscoreaceae	Chaaval kizhangu	Climber	Tuber	Edible	Sliced tubers are cooked and eaten.



<i>Dioscorea oppositifolia</i> L.	Dioscoreaceae	Vella manthal	Climber	Tuber	Edible	Tubers cooked and eaten.
<i>Dioscorea pentaphylla</i> L.	Dioscoreaceae	Nooraan kizhangu	Climber	Tuber	Edible	Tubers are boiled after being soaked in flowing water and then consumed like a vegetable.
<i>Dioscorea alata</i> L.	Dioscoreaceae	Peramuruthen	Climber	Tuber	Edible	Tubers cooked and eaten.
<i>Dioscorea wallichii</i> L.	Dioscoreaceae	Matti neduvan	Climber	Tuber	Edible	Tubers cooked and eaten.
<i>Nelumbo nucifera</i> Gaertn.	Nelumbonaceae	Lotus	Herb	Tuber	Edible	Two spoonfuls of tuber extract are administered twice daily to treat diarrhea. Tender petioles, seeds, and rhizome are utilized as vegetables.
<i>Pueraria tuberosa</i> (Willd.) DC.	Papilionaceae	Vidari kand	Climber	Tuber	Edible	For gastric ulcers, tuber extract is combined with a small amount of sugar and given.

Study area [Figure 1]

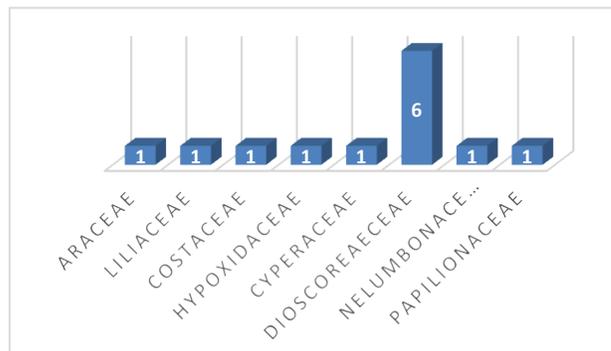




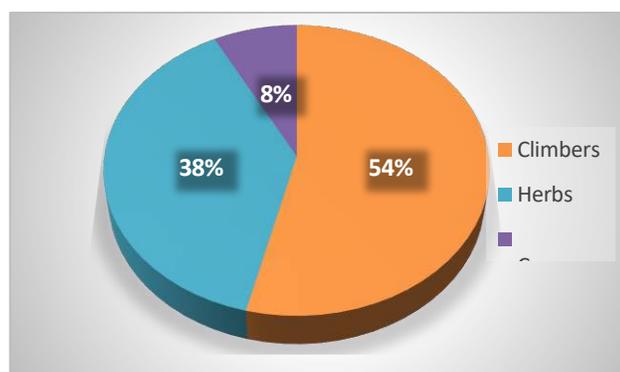
Visiting of study area [Figure 2]



Distribution of Tuers belonging to different families [figure 3]



Diversity of Tubers [figure 4]



Wild edible tubers used by the Kani tribes of Amboori in Thiruvananthapuram district [figure 5]





Amorphophallus paeniifolius



Asparagus racemosus



Costus speciosus



Curculigo orchioides



Cyperus rotundus



Dioscorea bulbifera



Dioscorea hispida



Dioscorea oppositifolia



Dioscorea pentaphylla



Dioscorea alata



Dioscorea wallichii



Nelumbo nucifera

Pueraria tuberosa

