

Colocasia esculenta

Colocasia esculenta is a tropical plant grown primarily for its edible corms, the root vegetables most commonly known as taro. It is believed to be one of the earliest cultivated plants.^[2]



Leaf

1 Names

This plant and its root is generally called taro, but it has different names in different countries like for instance eddoe. In the Philippines, it is usually called Gabi, Abi or Avi.

2 Description

Rhizomes of different shapes and sizes. Leaves up to 40×24.8 cm, sprouts from rhizome, dark green above and light green beneath, triangular-ovate, sub-rounded and mucronate at apex, tip of the basal lobes rounded or sub-rounded. Petiole 0.8 – 1.2 m high. Spathe up to 25 cm long. Spadix about 3/5 as long as the spathe, flowering parts up to 8 mm in diameter. Female portion at the fertile ovaries intermixed with sterile white ones. Neuters above the females, rhomboid or irregular oblong. Male portion above the neuter. Synandrium lobed, cells 6 or 8. Appendage shorter than the male portion.

3 Taxonomy

The specific epithet, *esculenta*, means “edible” in Latin.

Taro is related to *Xanthosoma* and *Caladium*, plants commonly grown as ornamentals, and like them it is sometimes loosely called **elephant ear**.

4 Distribution and habitat

Taro was probably first native to the lowland wetlands of Malaysia (taloos). Estimates are that taro was in cultivation in wet tropical India before 5000 BC, presumably coming from Malaysia, and from India further transported westward to ancient Egypt, where it was described by Greek and Roman historians as an important crop. In India, it is known as “Gaderi”, with smaller ones called “arbi” or “arvi” being more common and popular. In Indonesia, it is called *talas* or *keladi*.

In Australia, *Colocasia esculenta* var. *aquatilis* is native to the Kimberley region of Western Australia; variety *esculenta* is naturalised in Western Australia, the Northern Territory, Queensland and New South Wales.

In Turkey, *Colocasia esculenta* is locally known as “Gölevez” and mainly grown in Mediterranean coast, such as Alanya which is a district of Antalya.

5 Uses



Corms

Main articles: Taro and Eddoe

Taro’s primary use is the consumption of its edible corm and leaves. In its raw form, the plant is toxic due to the presence of calcium oxalate,^{[3][4]} and the presence of

needle-shaped raphides in the plant cells. However, the toxin can be minimized and the tuber rendered palatable by cooking,^[5] or by steeping in cold water overnight.

Corms of the small round variety are peeled and boiled, sold either frozen, bagged in its own liquids, or canned. The leaves are rich in vitamins and minerals.

It is also sold as an ornamental aquatic plant.

6 See also

- Taro
- Aquatic plants

7 References

- [1] “The Plant List: A Working List of All Plant Species”. Retrieved 15 February 2015.
- [2] Country profile: Samoa, New Agriculturist Online new-agri.co, accessed June 12, 2006
- [3] Weird Foods from around the World
- [4] ASPCA: Animal Poison Control Center: Toxic Plant List
- [5] *The Morton Arboretum Quarterly*, Morton Arboretum/University of California, 1965, p. 36.

8 External links

- *Colocasia esculenta* in West African plants – A Photo Guide.

9 Text and image sources, contributors, and licenses

9.1 Text

- **Colocasia esculenta** *Source:* <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colocasia%20esculenta?oldid=647230793> *Contributors:* Mdebets, Robbot, Johnfreez, Plugwash, Hesperian, Angusmclellan, Rsrikanth05, TDogg310, SmackBot, Canthusus, Rkitko, Delink, Takowl, Lambiam, Marco Schmidt, Escarbot, Thibbs, R'n'B, Tesscass, Kjell.kuehne, Iohannes Animosus, Chhe, Good Olfactory, Addbot, CarsracBot, Flakinho, Rojypala, MizzoulaB, Leovizza, Lucas-bot, Yobot, AnomieBOT, OllieFury, Xqbot, Noder4, Taka76, Krish Dulal, Pinethicket, Agong1, Bhawani Gautam, EmausBot, Look2See1, Jkadavoor, DJC 27613, Erianna, Hungda, MerllwBot, Declangi, AzseicsoK, Buzaku, Sminthopsis84, Bbaskbas, PeregrinXX and Anonymous: 13

9.2 Images

- **File:Colocasia_esculenta_at_Kadavoor.jpg** *Source:* http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/01/Colocasia_esculenta_at_Kadavoor.jpg *License:* CC BY-SA 4.0 *Contributors:* Own work *Original artist:* **Jeevan Jose, Kerala, India**
- **File:Commons-logo.svg** *Source:* <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/4/4a/Commons-logo.svg> *License:* ? *Contributors:* ? *Original artist:* ?
- **File:Taro_corms.JPG** *Source:* http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/5a/Taro_corms.JPG *License:* CC BY-SA 2.5 *Contributors:* <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Tarocorms.JPG> *Original artist:* Paxsimius

9.3 Content license

- Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0