



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
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New species of Genus *Curcuma* discovered in Nagaland

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Researchers have identified a **new relative of turmeric**, following an accidental discovery made during a field trip in Nagaland.



About *Curcuma ungmensis*

Kamaraj IAS Academy

Plot A P.127, AF block, 6 th street, 11th Main Rd, Shanthi Colony, Anna Nagar, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600040

Phone: 044 4353 9988 / 98403 94477 / Whatsapp : 09710729833

- The plant belongs to **the genus *Curcuma* (the ginger family *Zingiberaceae*)**.
 - It stands 65-90-cm high with prominent yellow flowers at full growth.
 - It has been given the name ***Curcuma ungmensis*** after **Ungma, the village in Mokokchung district** where it was found
 - It is a **rhizomatous herb**. The rhizome part is branched and found deeply buried in the soil.
 - Flowering occurs during the rainy season from August to October.
 - The flowers open in the morning and last a single day
 - It faces severe threats from road development, building construction and natural calamities.
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- A rhizome is a **modified subterranean plant stem** that ***sends out roots and shoots from its nodes***.
 - Rhizomes are also called **creeping rootstalks or just rootstalks**.
 - Rhizomes ***develop from axillary buds and grow horizontally***.
 - The rhizome also ***retains the ability to allow new shoots*** to grow upwards.

About Zingiberaceae

- Zingiberaceae or the ginger family is a **family of flowering plants** made up of about **50 genera with a total of about 1600 known species** of **aromatic perennial herbs**.
- These are distributed throughout tropical Africa, Asia, and the Americas.
- The family has **21 genera and about 200 taxa in India**

About Curcuma

- It is a genus of plants in the family Zingiberaceae that **contains such species as turmeric and Siam tulip**.
- They are **native to Southeast Asia, southern China, the Indian Subcontinent, New Guinea and northern Australia**.
- A few species are also found in northern Australia and the south Pacific.
- Generally, **most curcuma grows well in loose and sandy soil in shaded areas**.
- Curcuma is a **perennial, herbaceous plant** that can reach a height of 1 meter.
- It emits numerous, edible rhizomes whose interiors are yellow or orange.
- These rhizomes are reduced to a powder, which is the spice called curcuma.
- In India, the genus is represented by about 40 species, found mainly in northeast and southern States and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.