

Queensland Arrowroot

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Botanical name: *Canna edulis* of the CANNACEAE (Canna) family

Other names: Edible Canna, Achira, Purple Arrowroot

Tropical summary

A multi stemmed, clumping, ginger like plant growing to a height of 3 m. The edible portion are the under ground and ground level shoots, before they commence to grow into a stem. These shoots are dug, washed, peeled and cooked like a small potato.



Canna plants are perennial and grow year round in the tropics, provided they are supplied with sufficient water and fertilizer. It can be grown as a seasonal crop, taking around 8 months from planting to maturity. Positions with full sun to partial shade are suitable and the best soils are well mulched fertile soils with a loose structure like sandy loams.

The plants will flower and set seed but planting is best done by selecting larger healthy shoots or rhizome pieces. Plant shoots at spacings of 60 cm in low mounds or ridges 1m apart. Control of aggressive weeds is necessary till the arrowroot is large enough to shade them out.

Because the crop is relatively pest and disease free, produces around 15 tonne/ ha and is very palatable, it is often grown for stock feed and starch production.

Leaf eating grubs and white fly can damage to leaves but a good crop can still be expected.

Further information on horticulture

DPI&F Business information centre on 13 25 23 – local call 8 am to 6 pm Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays. (non-Queensland residents, phone 07 3404 6999)
E-mail callweb@dpi.qld.gov.au

Gardening in the tropics

This information series is aimed at promoting gardening activities in Cape York Peninsula. The crop plants and gardening techniques outlined have been chosen

with the specific requirements and constraints of the Cape York Peninsula Area in mind.

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