

Did You Know?



Turmeric, *Curcuma longa*

- Turmeric is a tropical plant in the Zingiberaceae family which also includes ginger, cardamom, and galangal. It resembles ginger in that it grows about 3 feet tall from a rhizome.
- Like ginger, the part of the plant that is harvested, crushed and ground is the rhizome.
- Turmeric grows in partial shade in tropical environments (USDA zones 8-11) and has white attractive flowers that appear on a spike-like stalk.
- The rhizomes are ready to harvest in late fall or early winter, after the foliage begins to die out.
- Turmeric is known for its orange color and use in Indian cooking, dyeing fabric and other textiles as well as for its health benefits.
- Turmeric is used in curry powder and is used around the world to provide color in commercially produced foods like mustard, ice cream, cereals, orange juice, cake frosting, chips, butter and sauces.
- Among the healing qualities, turmeric is known to have anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, antiseptic and pain-relieving qualities.
- Curcumin is the active compound in turmeric which is primarily responsible for turmeric's health benefits.
- Many health benefits have been attributed to the constituents that make up turmeric, from ancient Indian and Chinese healers to modern day Western medicine. Including:
 - Improved digestion
 - Reduced cancer risk
 - Improved cognitive function
 - Improved blood sugar balance
 - Pain relief through application of a poultice
 - Treatment of arthritis, bowel disorders, and Alzheimer's disease
- Used to dye the saffron robes of Buddhist monks more economically than saffron.
- The curcumin in turmeric is very sensitive to pH which causes a bright yellow dye in acid mixtures and orange-red with alkaline materials.

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