

Pandanus amaryllifolius Roxb. ex Lindl.

English name: Fragrant Pandan

Local names: Biriyanichedi, Rambha

Description:

Shrubs, reaching to 1-1.5 m tall, slightly leaning or erect stem with aerial root. Leaves light green, linear, sword like with pointed tip, apex abruptly rounded-acute, the lateral pleates obsolete, musky-scented. Juvenile leaves 30-65 x 2.5-4 cm and the adult leaves up to 115 x 7-8 cm. Margins usually unarmed except at the extreme tip, there may be few minute prickles and also on the portion of the midrib. Midrib at base rarely with a few short distant retrose prickles are less than 1mm long.



Distribution: Native of Indonesia, widely cultivated

Properties and uses:

The leaves are diuretic and cardio tonic. An infusion is used as a sedative against restlessness and is also a traditional treatment for diabetes. Externally, the leaves are used in the treatment of skin diseases. They are soaked in coconut oil; the oil is then employed as an embrocation for rheumatic troubles. Three Pepperdine alkaloids have been isolated and identified from the leaves. The application of the leaves as an antidiabetic drug is linked to 4-hydroxybenzoic acid, which has been isolated from the roots. It shows hypoglycaemic effects and increases serum insulin levels and liver glycogen content.

The aromatic leaves are used for perfume. Freshly chopped leaves are mixed with the petals of various flowers to make potpourris. The leaves can be woven into small baskets. They are used to make containers for desserts. The leaves are used to make

mats for sleeping on. An extract of the leaves is used as an ingredient in commercial cosmetic preparations as a deodorant and masking agent. The essential oil has insect-repellent activity, against the ordinary cockroach, *Periplaneta americana*. The leaf extract is used as food preservatives due to their antibacterial and antifungal properties (particularly against mould).

Cultivation details

Fragrant Pandan succeeds in full sun or light shade in moderately fertile, well-drained soil and tolerates shade very well.

Propagation is mainly through offshoots and cuttings. In well-established plants, there will be aerial roots and off-shoots. Cut the off-shoots and remove the bottom leaves to provide some space for the roots to grow. If the offshoot has bunches of aerial roots, plant them in moist soil, leveling them up to the neck of the shoot. Keep your baby in a small pot in a semi-shaded area for a couple of days before introducing it to full sun. Keep the soil moist but not wet.

Harvesting:

Continual harvesting of the leaves will prevent it from developing into the tree form. When abandoned or allowed to develop without hindrance, it grows very slowly but eventually will enter into the 'large' growth phase and develop a stout trunk. Harvesting of fragrant pandan may start about six months after planting and can continue for several years. Individual leaves are cut, leaving the top with 3 - 4 leaves intact. Branches do not have dormant buds and will not re-sprout if cut back into the old wood. Harvested twice a week, yielding 60 kg of fresh leaves per harvest, or 6 t/ha per year. The plant is dioecious and only the male form is known, so seeds cannot be produced. It can also be grown in pots.