

Cinnamomum verum J. Presl

Common name: Cinnamon, Tezpart, Dalchini

Malayalam name: Edana, Elavangam, Erikkolam, Kachakam, Karoon, Karuva, Kunthakaimaram, Santhamaram

Tamil names: Cannalavangappattai, Karuvapattai, Karuva, Ilavangam, Pulambilavu, Sorachattorachi

Hindi names: Dalchini, Daruchini

Description

Evergreen tree, attaining the height of about 10 m with thick, smooth, reddish brown bark; branchlets glabrous. Leaves simple, opposite or subopposite, 9.5-14 x 3.5-5.5 cm, ovate, elliptic ovate or elliptic-lanceolate, apex acute to acuminate, base acute, glabrous, coriaceous, 3-ribbed from base, prominent; lateral nerves 3-6 pairs, obscure, pinnate; petiole 8-20 mm, stout, glabrous, slightly grooved above. Flowers bisexual, in terminal and axillary, pale yellow, 5 mm long; perianth lobes 6, 3 mm long, oblong-lanceolate. Stamens 9 perfect; staminodes 3, of the forth row opposite the second row, stipitate. Ovary sessile. Fruit a berry, 1-2 cm, ellipsoid to oblong-ovoid, dark purple, surrounded by the enlarged perianth. The whole plant gives the characteristic smell of eugenol when crushed.

Distribution: South West India and Sri Lanka; widely cultivated

Uses

Cinnamon is an ancient, aromatic highly prized spice. It is used as a spice in our day to day life. It is principally employed in culinary as a condiment and flavoring agent. It has been acquainted as one of the healthiest spices and has medicinal properties. The bark contains rich amount of polyphenols which are powerful antioxidants. It reduces the growth of cancer cells. The plant is reported to be used in treating bronchitis, asthma, nausea, vomiting, flatulence, fever and for restoring normal skin, etc. Cinnamon oil is used as a stomachic and carminative. The paste made of bark with lemon juice is applied for the pimples as herbal medicine; the chewing of bark is very helpful in case of foul smell from the mouth. Also has the property of destroying certain germs and fungi

PROPAGATION

Soil and Climate

Sandy or lateritic soils with high humus are suitable for the species. Water-logged and marshy areas should be avoided, as they result in an undesirable, bitter product, which is less aromatic. It requires a warm and wet climate with an average temperature of about 27°C and no extremes of heat or cold and annual rainfall of 150 to 250 cm.

Propagation by seeds / Semi hardwood cuttings:

Seeds should be collected as soon as it ripe and must be sown immediately as seeds have less viability. Before sowing pulp should be removed as it inhibits germination. Seeds can be sown in July –August in the nursery beds and later on transplanted in poly bags. Germination can take 1 - 6 months. The seeds may be sown in nurseries or directly in the field. Nursery beds should be well-prepared having rich sandy soil free from roots and stones, with an adequate supply of fresh water nearby and be lightly shaded. After about 4 months, clumps of seedlings may be transplanted into baskets and are planted out 4 or 5 months later. Alternatively, the seedlings may be left in the nursery until the final transplanting. The hardening process before transplantation in the field should be carried by exposing seedlings to open conditions.

Planting: One-year-old seedlings are planted in pit size of 60 cm at the spacing of 2 m x 2 m during rainy seasons. It is advisable to fill pits with top soil and FYM.

Harvesting

Cinnamon is harvested by growing the tree for two years and after that practice of coppicing is followed to produce more branches. Two-year-old plants are coppiced during June–July to a height of about 15 cm from the stump. Afterwards, main stem produces a bunch of side shoots and subsequently the plants assume the shape of a low bush of about 2 m height and branches suitable for peeling crop up in a period of about 4 years. Regular peeling operations could be commenced in case of seedling bushes, from fourth or fifth year onwards, depending upon the extent of development of peeler shoots. Usually coppicing is done in alternate years. Cinnamon is ready for harvesting after 2-3 years from planting when the plant reaches a height of 1.5-2 m with three to four shoots and the bark turns brown in colour. Two to three crops are taken annually depending upon the rainfall. Ideal time for harvesting shoots is from September to November. Side shoots having finger thickness and uniform brown colour are ideal for bark extraction. A 'test cut' can be made on the stem with a sharp knife to judge the suitability of time of peeling. If the bark separates readily, the cutting can be commenced immediately.

Harvested shoots are bundled together and transported to the pack house for further post-harvest procedures.

Postharvest Management

The post-harvest includes following steps:

- Peeling of the inner bark
- Drying of the peels
- Grading of cinnamon rolls
- Preparation of cinnamon powder

ECONOMICS

About 75 kg of quillings and featherings are obtained. Further, ton of leaves which yield 1 to 1.25 kg of oil are obtained per year. The cinnamon bark costs up to Rs. 1000/ kg.

