

Medicinal and nutritional values of banana cv. NENDRAN

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ABSTRACT

There are many varieties of banana cultivated in the Agasthiyamalai ranges. Nendran ranks first in the commercial value. Four clones of Nendran recorded in the Agasthiyamalai range. Medicinally inflorescence axis of Nendran is a good lithonryptic; its fruit is laxative and the flower is for mensural disorder. Fruit pulp contains vitamins B₁, B₂, B₃, vitamin C, amino acids, iron, calcium phosphorus and proteins in substantial amount which are the daily need diet for human beings

Key words : Banana cv. NENDRAN, Medicinal value, Nutritional value

The word “banana” is a general term embracing a number of species or hybrids in the genus *Musa* of the family Musaceae. Bananas are cultivated commercially under tropical and subtropical conditions in all the states of India, except in those having extreme winter such as Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir. In Tamil Nadu, bananas are cultivated in about 88,100 hectares and the total production is estimated to 4406000 tonnes (Anonymous, 2003). India is the leader in banana production and exported nearly 940 metric tonnes of banana in the year (2007). In India, more than 600 varieties are known, but often many of the varieties carry a lot of synonyms. The Tamil Nadu Agricultural University recorded 115 varieties.

The ripe banana is utilized in a multitude of ways in the human diet. The banana is of great nutritious value and it has a rich combination of energy value, tissue building elements, proteins, vitamins and minerals. It is a good source of calories, many other nutrients and enzymes. People of South India, traditionally use banana as a balanced and supplementary diet. Hence, it is a wonderful nutritious diet for easy digestion, which prevents diarrhoea and worm trouble (Prem Kumar and Khurdlya, 2002).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Extensive field trips were conducted to the Agasthiyamalai ranges. The four clones of Nendran were identified with help of the traditional cultivators of banana. Crop duration was recorded by the repeated visits to twenty fields sample. Weight of the bunch, number of hands per bunch and total number of fruits in a bunch were calculated from the mean of twenty samples. Traditional banana cultivators from Kanyakumari and Trivandrum districts were interviewed to know the commercial value and other details of the banana. Small

industries of Nendran chips producing units were visited. Traditional Sidha practitioners from various parts of Kanyakumari and Trivandrum districts were interviewed to know the medicinal value. For the estimation of different nutritions of the Nendran fruits, the biochemical methods of Sadasivam and Manikam (1992) were followed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The variety, Nendran ranks first in commercial value. The cultivators of the Agasthiyamalai ranges call this variety “King of Banana”. The shelf-life of the fruits of Nendran is more, compared to that of others. So, the fruits of Nendran have been exported to the Arabian and European countries. In the Nendran group, four clones were identified namely, Nendran (Nattuyethan), Mysoreyethan, Chittyethan and Viraliyethan. Among these, the Chittyethan and Viraliyethan are neglected by the farmers because of their low commercial value. The size of the fruits is very small compared to Nendran and Mysoreyethan.

The duration of all the four crops is 11-12 months. The bunch weight of Nendran and Mysore nendran is 15-16 kgs whereas the Virali and Chittyethan have the bunch weight of 3-5 kgs. The Nendran and Mysoreyethan have 7-8 hands per bunch and each hand carries 12-14 fruits but Virali and Chittyethan have only 3-4 hands with 7-8 fruits per hand. The pulp of the fruit of Nendran and Mysoreyethan is pale yellow, whereas the Virali and Chittyethan pulp is yellowish orange.

Venugobal (2008) states that banana is mostly grown by small and marginal farmers either in homesteads or in well-drained rice fields. Nendran is the most popular commercial cultivar which is loved much by cultivators and has excellent fruit quality, sustained income and multiple uses ranging from being much valued for infants