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Canna indica

[Synonyms : *Canna achiras*, *Canna aurantiaca*, *Canna bidentata*, *Canna carnea*, *Canna cearensis*, *Canna chinensis*, *Canna cinnabarina*, *Canna coccinea*, *Canna compacta*, *Canna concinna*, *Canna discolor*, *Canna edulis*, *Canna esculenta*, *Canna formosa*, *Canna heliconiifolia*, *Canna humilis*, *Canna indica* var. *limbata*, *Canna lagunensis*, *Canna lamberti*, *Canna lanuginosa*, *Canna limbata*, *Canna lutea*, *Canna lutea* var. *aurantiaca*, *Canna lutea* var. *genuina*, *Canna musifolia*, *Canna nepalensis*, *Canna occidentalis*, *Canna orientalis*, *Canna pallida*, *Canna patens*, *Canna polyclada*, *Canna rubra*, *Canna rubricaulis*, *Canna sanguinea*, *Canna seleriana*, *Canna sellowi*, *Canna speciosa*, *Canna surinamensis*, *Canna sylvestris*, *Canna variabilis*, *Canna warszewiczii*]

INDIAN SHOT is a perennial. Native to the American tropics (particularly Brazil) it has pale pink to red flowers.

It is also known as *Aburobia* (Twi), *Achira* (Spanish), African arrowroot, *Albará* (Portuguese), *Araruta bastarda* (Portuguese), *Araruta de porco* (Portuguese), Arrowroot, *Bakalele* (Hausa, Nigerian), *Bakare kare* (Hausa, Nigerian), *Balisier* (French), *Balisier à chapelets* (French, West Indian), *Balisier comestible* (French), *Balisier des Indes* (French), *Balisier jaune* (West Indian), *Balisier rouge* (Creole, West Indian), *Bananeiras de Flor* (Portuguese), *Bananeirinha da India* (Portuguese), *Bandera de uriba* (Colombian, Spanish), *Birú manso* (Portuguese), *Butusarana* (Singhalese), *Café cimarron* (Panamanian, Spanish), *Calenda* (West Indian), *Caña comestible* (Spanish), *Caña de la India* (Spanish), *Canas da India* (Portuguese), *Canna* (English, French, German), *Canna d'Inde* (French), *Canna florifère* (French), *Canna lily*, *Capacho* (Colombian, Spanish), *Chisgua* (Colombian, Spanish), *Chumbima* (Colombian, Spanish), *Conteiras* (Portuguese), *Cù dong giêng* (Vietnamese), *Dosna indická* (Czech), Edible canna, English shot, *Gaane sarvadaa* (Nepalese), Indian reed, *Indisch bloemriet* (Dutch), *Indisches Blumenrohr* (German), *Kakuintásan* (Filipino/Tagalog), *Kana indická* (Slovak), *Kana indika* (Japanese), *Kanao manĝebla* (Esperanto), *Kanna* (Danish, Swedish), *Kanna indiiskaia* (Russian), *Maraca* (Spanish), *Mei ren jiao* (Chinese), *Platanillo* (Spanish), Purple arrowroot, Queensland arrowroot, Sierra Leone arrowroot, *Toloman* (French, West Indian), *Tous-les-mois* (French, West Indian), *Westindisches Blumenrohr* (German), and *Yuquilla* (Spanish).

Cultivated varieties can be found in many colours, including scarlet, orange or yellow or a mixture of them.

Indica means 'of or from India, or the East Indies or the Far East'.

The hard black seeds are used for making necklaces and Buddhists' rosaries – the Singhalese name for Indian shot *butusarana* means 'help from Buddha'. In stark contrast the small seeds have also been used by African children as ammunition in their toy popguns, and as pellets in shooters they were once used to kill small birds.

The leaves are used locally for wrapping food, and the South American Tunebo Indians of Ecuador and Colombia also use them for thatching, and for wrapping newborn babies. In addition for this tribe the roots also form part of their staple diet.

Apparently birds are drawn to the flowers in the dry season to sip the sweet nectar. Knowing this local children have placed the flowers in bird traps.

Medicinally, some African tribes have taken baths in the leaves mashed in water to ease fever, and some have claimed that the flowers have provided effective cures for various eye diseases.