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Dioscorea elephantipes

[Synonyms : *Tamus elephantipes*, *Testudinaria elephantipes*]

ELEPHANT'S FOOT is a deciduous, twining vine. Native to South Africa it has greenish-yellow flowers.

It is also known as *Dioskoreia slonovaia* (Russian), *Diosukorea erefantipesu* (Japanese), *Elefantenfuss* (German), Hottentot bread, *Hottentotsbrood* (Afrikaans), *Hottentotten-Yams* (German), *Kikkuuruu* (Japanese), *Schildkrötenpflanze* (German), and Tortoise plant.

The tubers can reach a height of 3 ft. and can weigh as much as 750 lb. Their slow growth is well illustrated by the fact that a tuber will only have reached about 3 in. long after approximately 8 years.

Warning – unprocessed tubers are poisonous and can cause internal and external irritation.

Elephantipes means 'like an elephant's foot' with reference to the half-exposed tuber.

Unlike some of the other yams elephant's foot is not a regular source of food although the starchy tubers can provide emergency rations.

This species is one that has been shown to contain steroids (see Wild yam, *Dioscorea villosa* below).