

*Tacca leontopetaloides*

[Synonyms : *Chaitea tacca*, *Leontice leontopetaloides*, *Tacca abyssinica*, *Tacca artocarpifolia*, *Tacca browni* var. *paeoniifolia*, *Tacca brownii*, *Tacca dubia*, *Tacca gaogao*, *Tacca guineensis*, *Tacca hawaiiensis*, *Tacca involucrata*, *Tacca maculata*, *Tacca madagascariensis*, *Tacca oceanica*, *Tacca pinnatifida*, *Tacca pinnatifida* var. *aconitifolia*, *Tacca pinnatifida* var. *acutifolia*, *Tacca pinnatifida* var. *brownii*, *Tacca pinnatifida* subsp. *eupinnatifida*, *Tacca pinnatifida* subsp. *interrupta*, *Tacca pinnatifida* subsp. *involucrata*, *Tacca pinnatifida* var. *maculata*, *Tacca pinnatifida* subsp. *madagascariensis*, *Tacca pinnatifida* subsp. *minor*, *Tacca pinnatifida* var. *obtusata*, *Tacca pinnatifida* var. *paeoniifolia*, *Tacca pinnatifida* var. *permagna*, *Tacca pinnatifolia*, *Tacca quanzensis*, *Tacca samoensis*, *Tacca umbrarum*, *Tacca viridis*]

**TAHITI ARROWROOT** is a perennial. Native to Malaysia and the Pacific Islands it has small yellow or purplish-green flowers with long purplish-brown threads, surrounded by purplish-brown petal-like leaves (bracts).

It is also known as African arrowroot, Arrowroot, Bathflower, *Chanchizhanna* (Malayalam), *Chanda* (Telugu), *Diva* (Hindi), East Indian arrowroot, Fiji arrowroot, *Gerandi-kidaran* (Singhalese), Hawaii arrowroot, Indian arrowroot, *Kachondang* (Sundanese), *Karachunai* (Tamil), Katjondong, *Leker* (Javanese and Malay), Likir, Loki, *Mahoa'a* (Tongan), Pi, *Pia* (Hawaiian), Polynesian arrowroot, South Sea arrowroot, Telo, Williams arrowroot, *Yabia* (Fijian), and *Yabyában* (Filipino/Tagalog).

The roots can sometimes reach a weight of 2 lb.

A bitter-tasting arrowroot-like starch is extracted from the roots (which is only edible baked after it has been repeatedly washed).

Warning – the root starch is poisonous until processed.

*Leontopetaloides* is derived from Greek *leon* (lion) and *petalon* (petal) components with reference to the fringed petals resembling a lion's mane.

Locally the underground stems (which have an intensely bitter acrid taste when raw) are boiled or roasted as a vegetable. They have been eaten grated and roasted in Hawaii – and in one area of the Pacific Islands they are an ingredient in a traditional pudding called *Poi*.

The stems, split into narrow strips, cured and dried have been used in Tahiti to make lightweight glossy, white hats.

Root starch has been used as a starch in laundries. It has also been used as a glue when making cloth.

Medicinally, root starch has been used by some for treating dysentery and diarrhoea and is considered to be one of the best remedies.