

Appemidi: Unique Aromatic Pickle Mango

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SUMMARY

India is blessed with the rich diversity of mango. Its popularity and importance can easily be realized by the fact that it is referred to as the 'king of fruits' in the tropical world. Aromatic pickle-mango types, locally termed as 'Appemidi' are naturally grown in wild habitats of Western Ghats. Unlike commercial mango, appemidi fruits are extremely sour and cannot be used as edible flesh fruits and hence are used in pickle making. Traditionally, these tender fruits are also used in household preparations such as gojju, sasve, thambuli and chutney.

INTRODUCTION

Mango (*Mangifera indica* L.) is an important fruit crop in India having socio-economic significance. Karnataka state has unique position with respect to the diversity of pickling mango varieties. The Western Ghats is largely unexplored for the whole fruited pickle variety, locally called 'Appemidi' (midi means tender mango in Kannada). The appemidi is not just an ordinary mango, its fragrance is so strong that adding just a few midis to an ordinary pickle can change its taste and smell. Appemidi is the king of all tender mangoes as far as its use in pickle industry is concerned.

Origin

The appemidi is a native to the forests of Western Ghats, where there are natural plantations of hundred years old mango trees in the valleys of the Aghanashini, Kumudvati, Kali, Varada, Bedthi and Sharavathi rivers in Shivamogga and Utara Kannada districts of Karnataka.

Culinary uses

Appemidi occupies a special place in Malnad cuisine and its culture. The fruits, at all the stages of development are used for culinary purpose. The tender and the slightly older ones are used for pickling. The fully matured ones consisting of the stone or the developing seed are boiled and preserved for longer durations in salt solution. They are used as alternatives for tomato or tamarind. Appemidis are also used to make gojju (a kind of chutney), sasuve (a different preparation), appehuli, chutney and thambuli, which is a good digestive.



Appemidi Mango Tree



Appemidi Mango Fruits

Pickles

The first customers for appemidi are household pickle-makers. Pickle making has become a virtual home industry in the last decade. It is said that over 100 farm households are engaged in making pickle, producing around 100 tonnes a year. Home producers supply pickle in simple glass jars. These homemade pickles have no artificial preservatives. The mango latex itself gives the pickle a shelf life of around four years. Tender mangoes are available only during March to May *i.e* during summer season but, pickles are available all the time throughout the year.

Potential for Appemidi mango

Appemidi products have high potential for marketing. The mango's unique size and taste makes pickle one of the best in India. The demand for pickles varies from 4,000 to 5,000 tons per year, translating to Rs 90 to 100 crore per year. This 'Appemidi' (tender mango) market is valued around Rs.12 crore (on the lower side) per annum in Karnataka alone.



Mango Pickle

Ripponpet market in Shivamogga sees a turnover of several lakhs of rupees during the months of March and April. A good quality tender mango costs around 1-1.50 ₹ while, the price for a quintal could go up to almost 6000 ₹ depending on demand and availability. Since the supply of appemidi meets only one-tenth of demand in the market, they are often mixed with ordinary tender mangoes.

Characteristics of Appemidi Mango

- The appemidi varieties are generally seen on the banks of the rivers and streams. The trees observed in their original habitat in most cases, they are more than 100 years old.
- The shape of the fruit varies from round to oblong to ovoid.
- Fruits in most of the varieties are small sized and have strong aroma.
- They are highly acidic having thick stalk, small seed, thin skin, thick pulp and generally long fruit, most of them cannot be used as fresh fruit.
- The fruits are characterized by bunch bearing habit.
- The yield in most of the trees is anywhere between 2000 to 6000 fruits.
- Immature fruits are exclusively used for making whole fruited pickles.
- The large variability observed in appemidi is because of the multiplication through seeds.
- The shelf life of pickles prepared from these varieties vary between 2 to 5 years.

Classification

Based on flavour, it can be broadly divided into 4 types:

- Jeerige (Cumins seeds flavour)
- Karpoora appe (Camphor flavour)

- Kancha appe (Sour orange flavour)
- Sada appe (Mango flavour)

Names

Each variety of appemidi is named after a village, person or a family with appe as suffix.

- Person: ‘Anantha Bhattana appe’, Gangamma appe.
- Shape: Karnakundala, Gundappe.
- Families: Purappe mane, Nandagar appe.
- Villages: Adderi jeerige, Salugottige appe, Dombesarada midi, Malalagadde, Barige jeerige, Konanakatte kere jeerige, Kasina jeerige, Siddaki jeerige, Menasinakodlu appe, Manadoorkatte appe.

Diversity

About 300 known varieties are found in Uttara Kannada district and 700 varieties in the Malnad region of Karnataka. They differ in shape, aroma, skin colour, flesh colour, stalk length, taste, as well as shelf life. Each one of them is unique in nature. Uttara Kannada district is said to be the ‘Cradle of Appemidi’ because, about 46 per cent of all mango varieties found in the home-gardens and farmlands of Uttara Kannada district are ‘appemidi’ types (Vasudeva *et al.*, 2015).

Danger of extinction

Appemidi mango trees in Malnad region have become endangered due to negligence and destruction. A classical example is that of the variety ‘Gundappe’, which only a few years back used to give >2000 to 3000 fruits, but today the tree is not there. As per the locals, the pulp of ‘Gundappe’ is very thick and firm, which none of the other appe types have.

Road to conservation

Innumerable, valuable, indigenous varieties have already been lost in mango. Hence, there is a need to locate and adopt the methodology of on farm conservation. It is essential to document, conserve and improve wild mango varieties to prevent the loss of precious gene pool. College of Forestry, Sirsi, Karnataka has worked extensively with farmers to conserve aromatic mango varieties. They have documented 103 aromatic mango varieties of Uttara Kannada district and established a clonal bank (a living collection of selected clones). Grafts of best 40 varieties have been distributed to farmers. It facilitated the creation of seven farmer diversity parks in Uttara Kannada district, where varieties of native species like appemidi are conserved.

CONCLUSION

‘Appemidi’ is an endangered treasure of Western Ghats. The diversity of these types has to be explored and evaluated. Further, there is need to identify desirable traits in these indigenous genotypes so that they can be conserved for the better future. The cultivation of better types of the ‘appemidi’ genotypes on larger area can meet the potential demand for this unique aromatic pickling mango.

REFERENCES

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