



Super Floral Retailing has created this page for the education of store-level employees. To download a reprintable PDF, please go to www.superfloraretailing.com and select "Current Issue."

curcuma



Photo courtesy of The John Henry Company

Curcuma alismatifolia
Siam tulip

varieties

The *Curcuma* genus has an estimated 1,000 species. Some of the species available as potted plants include:

- *Curcuma alismatifolia* 'Chaingmai Pink' - Pale purple/pink bracts
- *C. cordata* 'Pastel Hidden Ginger' - Cream bracts with a lavender/pink crown
- *C. gracillima* 'Chocolate Zebra' - green bracts with red stripes
- *C. longa* 'O'Lena' - Scarlet pink bracts with small yellow flowers
- *C. parviflora* 'White Angel' - Green spiraled bracts and tiny lavender/purple flowers



Photo courtesy of California Cut Flower Commission

Curcuma
Turmeric, Indian saffron, Siam tulip, Summer tulip, Queen tulip, Queen lily, Hidden lily

BOTANICAL NAME

Curcuma spp. (KER-koo-muh)

COMMON NAMES

Turmeric, Indian saffron, Siam tulip, Summer tulip, Queen tulip, Queen lily, Hidden lily

DESCRIPTION

Curcumas' foliage is generally lush, broad, sometimes pleated and often colorful. The striking tubular-shaped "blossoms" are actually leafy bracts. *Curcuma* plants grow from thick rhizomes and can be treated like bulb plants.

COLORS

Bract colors include hues of pink, red, orange, green, lavender, purple and white.

DECORATIVE LIFE

With appropriate care, *Curcuma* plants can continue to bloom for up to three months. Blooms appear in the spring, summer or fall, depending on variety.

AVAILABILITY

Blooming *Curcumas* generally are available as potted plants from March to October. The rhizomes can be purchased and planted from November to April.

in-store and consumer care

LIGHT Moderate, diffused light is best for *Curcuma* plants. Don't display them in direct sunlight.

WATER Chlorinated water can be harmful; consider using rainwater. Keep these plants evenly moist (not soggy). Severe drying will cause the leaves to yellow and drop and will delay flower production.

TEMPERATURE *Curcumas* are sensitive to low temperatures and extreme heat. Avoid locations with drafts, and keep the plants away from heat ducts and heat-producing appliances like TV sets. Holding the plants for any length of time at temperatures below 50 F can cause purpling, browning and rot. **HUMIDITY** *Curcumas* require high levels of humidity. Place the plants on pebble trays to increase humidity.

FERTILIZER Feed *Curcumas* with a diluted solution of a complete houseplant fertilizer or orchid bloom fertilizer every two to three weeks, or more often if necessary.

SOIL Use a well-drained organic soil mix.

REBLOOMING *Curcumas* go dormant for the winter. Do not water the plants while they are in the dormant stage.

challenge

ETHYLENE SENSITIVITY *Curcumas* are sensi-

fun facts

WHAT'S IN A NAME The genus name "*Curcuma*" comes from the Persian-Arabic word for "saffron," which is "*kurkum*."

FAMILY *Curcumas* are members of the *Zingiberaceae* (ginger) family. Relatives include *Alpinia purpurata* (red ginger), *Amomum* (cardamon) and *Hedychium* (ginger-lily).

HOME SWEET HOME These plants are native to Thailand, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia.

SUGGESTED USES *Curcumas* are ideal for interior planters in malls and offices and anywhere tropical color is desired. They do well in atriums and as accent plants on tables or desks if adequate light is available. They also provide a nice touch of color outdoors in shaded locations in the summer or year-round in warmer areas.

tive to ethylene gas, so keep them away from fruits and vegetables. Be sure your plants have been treated with an anti-ethylene agent at the grower level or during transportation. **sfr**

Some information provided by:
Aloha Tropicals, www.alohatropicals.com/curcuma.html
Chain of Life Network®, www.chainoflifenetWORK.org
Roy Borodkin, Brannan Street Wholesale Florist,
San Francisco, Calif.

Reach "Blooming Plant of the Month" writer Steven W. Brown, AIFD, at sbfloral@aol.com or (415) 239-3140.