

Ela (Elettaria Cardamomum)

Family : Zingiberaceae



Introduction

Ela, commonly known as Cardamom, is an aromatic spice widely used in cooking and Ayurvedic medicine. It is known as the "Queen of Spices" due to its strong flavor, pleasant aroma, and numerous medicinal benefits. Cardamom is used in treating digestive issues, respiratory problems, and heart disorders, and it is also known for its cooling and detoxifying effects.

Names in Different Indian Languages

English: Cardamom

Hindi: Elaichi

Kannada: Elakki

Malayalam: Elathari

Sanskrit: Ela, Ela, Truti

Tamil: Elakkai

Telugu: Yelakulu

Unani: Heel Khurd

Synonyms

Sugandha Dravya (Aromatic herb)

Chaturbija (One of four essential digestive seeds in Ayurveda)

Kapha-hara (Reduces mucus & congestion)

Dipaniya (Improves digestion & metabolism)

Classification According to Ayurveda

Charaka Samhita:

Shwasahara (Relieves breathing issues, asthma, cough)

Triptighna (Removes excessive thirst, prevents dehydration)

Dipana (Improves digestion, relieves bloating)

Hridaya (Good for heart health, regulates blood pressure)

Sushruta Samhita:

Vata-Kaphahara (Balances Vata and Kapha doshas)

Rasayana (Acts as a rejuvenator, anti-aging herb)

Vagbhata:

Hrudya (Heart tonic, strengthens the cardiovascular system)

Kushtaghna (Useful in skin diseases, detoxifies the body)

Varieties & Adulterants

Varieties:

Elettaria cardamomum (True Green Cardamom) – Used in Ayurveda

Amomum subulatum (Black Cardamom) – Stronger, used in Unani & Tibetan medicine

Adulterants:

Nepal cardamom (Amomum subulatum) – Sometimes sold as green cardamom but has a different medicinal effect

Synthetic flavoring agents – Used in commercial cardamom products

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Part Used

Seeds (Most commonly used)

Pods (Fruits) – Used in decoctions and infusions

Essential Oil – Used in aromatherapy, skin treatments

Morphology

Type: Perennial herb

Leaves: Lance-shaped, dark green, aromatic

Flowers: Pale green, slightly purple veins

Fruit: Small, green capsules containing black seeds

Seeds: Highly fragrant, slightly sweet, spicy taste

Habitat & Distribution

Grown in tropical rainforests of India, Sri Lanka, and Bhutan.

Mainly cultivated in Kerala, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu.

Chemical Constituents

Volatile Oils: Terpineol, Cineole, Linalool

Alkaloids: Elettarin, Elettarine

Flavonoids: Quercetin, Luteolin

Tannins: Gallic acid

Minerals: Calcium, Magnesium, Potassium

Properties According to Ayurveda

Rasa (Taste): Madhura (Sweet), Katu (Pungent)

Guna (Qualities): Laghu (Light), Snigdha (Oily), Tikshna (Sharp)

Virya (Potency): Ushna (Hot)

Vipaka (Post-digestive effect): Madhura (Sweet)

Karma (Therapeutic actions):

Dipana-Pachana (Boosts digestion & metabolism)

Shwasahara (Relieves respiratory congestion, asthma)

Hridaya (Strengthens the heart, improves circulation)

Mutrala (Diuretic, removes kidney stones & toxins)

Vranaropana (Heals ulcers, wounds, and skin infections)

Meda-Hara (Reduces fat accumulation, aids in weight loss)

Indications

Digestive Disorders – Indigestion, bloating, loss of appetite

Respiratory Problems – Cough, asthma, congestion

Heart Health – Regulates blood pressure, strengthens cardiac muscles

Oral Health – Fights bad breath, gum infections

Kidney & Urinary Issues – Acts as a diuretic, prevents kidney stones

Skin Disorders – Acne, skin allergies, wound healing

Dosage

Powder: 1-2 g

Decoction (Kwath): 20-50 ml

Cardamom Tea: 1-2 cups per day

Essential Oil: 2-5 drops (Diluted in water or carrier oil)

External Uses

Mouth Freshener: Chewing cardamom seeds freshens breath and prevents cavities.

Skin Cleanser: Used in face masks and creams for acne-prone skin.

Headache Relief: Inhalation of cardamom oil or vapor relieves headaches.

Internal Uses

Digestive System

Improves appetite and relieves gas, bloating, and acidity.

Used as a remedy for nausea and vomiting.

Respiratory System

Reduces phlegm, clears nasal congestion, and soothes the throat.

Helps in chronic cough and asthma.

Circulatory System

Regulates blood pressure and improves heart function.

Urinary System

Acts as a natural diuretic, flushing out kidney toxins.

Useful in treating urinary tract infections (UTIs).

Reproductive System

Considered an aphrodisiac in traditional medicine.

Used for hormonal balance in both men and women.

Satmikaran (Rejuvenation & Detoxification)

Cardamom is a natural detoxifier that removes toxins from the body.

Acts as a mild adaptogen, reducing stress and anxiety.

Important Ayurvedic Formulations (Yogas)

Eladi Churna – Digestive powder for acidity & indigestion

Eladi Vati – Herbal tablet for cough & sore throat

Triphala Eladi Kwath – Combination for detox & weight loss

Eladi Gutika – For mouth ulcers and bad breath

Important Research Work on Ela

1. Anti-Inflammatory Activity – Reduces joint pain, swelling, and inflammation.
2. Anti-Microbial Effects – Fights bacterial and fungal infections.
3. Gastroprotective Action – Prevents stomach ulcers.
4. Anti-Hypertensive Activity – Helps in lowering blood pressure naturally.
5. Neuroprotective Benefits – Supports brain function and reduces stress.
6. Anti-Diabetic Effect – Helps in controlling blood sugar levels.

Therapeutic Uses

1. Indigestion & Bloating – Ela powder with honey aids digestion.

2. Respiratory Congestion – Ela tea clears nasal blockages.
3. Oral Health – Chewing seeds removes bad breath and strengthens gums.
4. Heart Health – Ela-infused water lowers blood pressure.
5. Weight Loss – Regular use boosts metabolism and burns fat.
6. Urinary Health – Ela decoction prevents kidney stones and infections.

Ela (Cardamom) is a powerful digestive tonic, detoxifier, and heart-strengthening herb. It is one of the most versatile Ayurvedic herbs used in both medicine and daily cooking. Its pleasant aroma and cooling properties make it an essential ingredient in traditional remedies for digestion, respiratory health, and detoxification.