

5. Planting and management

This Shade loving shrub is usually planted with its rhizome and can be planted at 2x2m spacing in plantations and in semi shady areas. It should also be planted in places where water can be easily accessed but also well drained. Weeding and pruning of excess plants should also be done regularly.



Bibliography and further reading

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Published by World Agroforestry Centre, and Rubber Research Institute of Nigeria



This publication is an output from a Rubber Agroforestry Project financed by the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC), an intergovernmental financial institution established within the framework of the United Nations, headquartered in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

The views expressed are not necessarily those of CFC/IRSG/21.



Alligator pepper

alligator pepper - fonde

Family : Zingerberaceae



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1. Species identity

• **Names**

Scientific name : *Aframomum melegueta*, K.Schum
Common Names : Grains of Paradise, melegueta pepper, alligator pepper, Guinea pepper, Guinea grain.
Vernacular names : (Nigeria) Alligator pepper,(Ivory Coast) Fonde, (Ethiopian) (Ghana) (Sierra Leone) (Togo) .

• **Botanical description**

A tropical perennial growing up to 5' tall, it has lanceolate leaves up to 9" long, originally from West Africa, brought over to Surinam by the slaves. The numerous seeds are borne in grayish - brown capsules. The important part of this plant is the seed; the small reddish - brown seeds have a pungent aroma with a pepper - like heat. This spice is tempered with among others, flavors reminiscing of hazelnut, butter and citrus.



2. Ecology and distribution

• **Natural habitat and geographical distribution**

Alligator pepper is native to swampy habitats along the West African coast and humid areas, chiefly Ghana and Nigeria.



3. Uses

3.1 Products

Food : It is a common ingredient in West African cuisine, where it imparts both pungency and a spicy aroma to classic West African soups (stews). Also as a flavoring to West African soups or boiled rice. Alligator pepper is commonly eaten together with Kola nut and Bitter Kola. Alligator pepper helps to remove the bitter taste of Bitter kola. Because alligator pepper is hot it kills the sensation of taste in the mouth so that Bitter kola will lose its bitterness or at least reduce while being chewed.

Medicines : Alligator pepper is considered as a natural aphrodisiac, it can be used to catalyze the healing process of some traditional medicine

3.2 Service

- Use for Naming ceremonies, as presentation to visiting guests
- When babies are born in Yoruba culture,(Nigeria) they are given a small taste of alligator pepper shortly after birth as part of the routine baby-welcoming process

4. Propagation methods

- Germination is mainly from the rhizome
- Time to first germination : 6-8 days
- Substrate for transplanting : garden or forest soil
- Success rate : > 70% after 4 weeks

