



Regional Plant Resource Centre

An autonomous organization under the Department of Forest and Environment, Govt. of Odisha, India

# PLANT OF THE WEEK

26th week  
2-11-2015

## *Gloriosa superba* L.

### Botanical Name :

*Gloriosa superba* L.

### Synonyms (s) :

*Gloriosa superba* var. *angustifolia* Baker

*Glori-*

*osa superba* var. *graminifolia* (Franch.)

Hoenselaar

*Gloriosa superba* f. *grandiflora* (Hook.)

Kuntze

**Family :** Colchicaceae

### Local Name

**English :** Malabar glory Lily

**Hindi :** Languli, Kulhari, Kaliari

**Odiya :** Ognisikha, Meheria phul, Karihari, Durga phulo

**Bengali :** Bisha languli, Ulat chandal, Kariari

**Telugu :** Adavi nabhi, Kallapa gadda, Ganjeri, Poti-dumpa, Puttichetu

### Habitat

Sporadic in open forests and scrubs.

### Distribution

India, Malayasia, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam, Africa, Indonesia, China, Combdia.

Throughout Odisha

**Flowering :** September—November

**Fruiting :** November-December

### Conservation Status

Least Concern (IUCN)

Endangered (FRLHT)



*Gloriosa superba* L.  
a spectacular and stunning  
flowering plant  
locally known as Flame lily

### Description

Pretty climbing or usually scrambling, glabrous herb, 0.9-3 m, with rhizome usually forked, ca. 1 cm in diam. fleshy.

Leaves alternate, sessile or shortly petiolate, lanceolate to ovate lanceolate, 7.5-18.5 x 1.2-5 cm, apex long caudate with a tendril, finely parallel nerved each side of the midrib, base rounded.

Flowers 8-15 cm across, solitary axillary on reflexed pedicels,; pedicels rather stout, up to 17.5 cm long. Tepals reflexed, bright red, proximally tinged with yellow, linear-oblongate, 4.0-5.0 cm x 7-9 mm, base slightly clawed, margin much crisped. Filaments ca. 4 cm, anthers ca. 1 cm. Style 2.5-3.5 cm; stigma lobes ca. 7 mm.

Fruit oblong, 4-6.5 cm long. Seeds orange-red, ca.5 mm across.

### Amazing fact

*Gloriosa superba* is widely cultivated as an ornamental for its stunning flowers.



The generic name *Gloriosa* means 'full of glory' and the specific epithet *superba* means 'superb', alluding to the striking red and yellow flower.

Flame lily is the State flower of Tamilnadu and also it is the national flower of Zimbabwe (where it is protected from illegal harvesting under the Parks and Wildlife Act). This spectacular species is in decline in some areas of India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and southern Africa, due to over-collection of the seeds and tubers. Although commercially cultivated in southern India, it is estimated that pharmacies and drug manufacturers in India fulfill up to 75% of their raw material demand from wild populations.

The Indian Postal Department issued a postal stamp to commemorate this flower.

### Uses

*Gloriosa superba* (Flame lily) has a wide variety of uses as Ayurvedic medicine in Asia. It contains the alkaloid colchicine, which is widely used as an experimental tool in the study of cell division, as it can inhibit mitosis and induce polyploidy. So, it has been used effectively to treat cancer, acute gout, intestinal worms, infertility, chronic ulcers, arthritis, cholera, colic, kidney problems wounds, and other skin problems. It has also been used as an antidote for snake bite, as a laxative. All parts of the plant, but especially the tubers are extremely poisonous and the ingestion of flame lily has caused many accidental deaths. Therefore, it has been used to commit murder, suicide, to induce abortions and to poison dogs.



### Source

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