

# TURMERIC: A condiment and medicinal crop

Dr. Girish K. Panicker\*

**Turmeric** is a very important condiment and medicinal crop with varied uses in food, drug, and cosmetic industry. This crop is propagated from its rhizome. It is a perennial belonging to the family Zingiberaceae and a native of India and China. It is widely cultivated in tropical and subtropical regions of the world. The leaves are broad, lanceolate, and bright green. The flowers are pale yellow and borne on dense spikes.

**Climate & Soil:** This crop requires a warm and humid climate. Turmeric thrives in well-drained, fertile, sandy and clayey loams rich in humus. Rich loamy soils with good drainage and irrigation facilities are the best for this crop. Turmeric cannot stand water stagnation or alkalinity. It can be grown as an intercrop with fruit crops.

**Cultivation:** The land should be plowed 4 to 6 times to bring the soil to a fine tilth. Raise beds of two feet width and sow the rhizomes two inches deep. The general spacing on rich soil is 2 feet between rows and one foot between plants. The fingers are cut into pieces each 2 inches long and the mother-rhizomes are planted as such or split into two; each having at least one good bud. The rhizomes are sometimes sprouted under moist straw before sowing. Depending upon the spacing, the seed rate varies from 1,700 to 2,200 pounds per acre. Only 350 pounds of Rhizome is required, if intercropping on orchards. Turmeric is a heavy feeder and it needs heavy application of organic manure.

At least 15,000 to 18,000 pounds of composted cow manure and 10,000 pounds of compost should be applied per acre for organic production. The rhizomes are ready for harvesting about 7 to 9 months after planting. This crop returns more than 4,000 pounds of dry residue/acre.

**Yield:** The yield of a mono crop varies from 17,500 to 19,000 pounds per acre. Under exceptionally favorable conditions with heavy manuring and plentiful irrigation, the yield may be as high as 25,000 pounds per acre.

**Medicinal properties:** Turmeric contains curcumin, a diet-derived promising chemopreventive agent. Curcumin has anti-inflammatory, and cytotoxic effects; possesses antifungal and antibacterial properties; has demonstrated the ability to lower cholesterol levels and heal ulcers; and has shown antioxidant, antimutagen, anticarcinogen properties in numerous studies. Turmeric is reportedly effective in the treatment of number of conditions, including arthritis, Alzheimer's, prostate, obesity, Parkinson's and digestive problems.



**Turmeric: Fully grown plants**



Statements made about Turmeric and its products are from published papers and they have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. You are advised to consult with a physician prior to making any decisions or undertaking any actions. The author will not be responsible for any decision made due to your reading of this flyer.

\*Girish K. Panicker, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Director, Conservation Research Center, Ecology and Natural Resources Building, School of Agriculture, and Applied Sciences, Alcorn State University, Lorman, MS 39096

Tel: 601 877-6598/3372

E-mail: [panicker@alcorn.edu](mailto:panicker@alcorn.edu)



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