

A tree legume which is quite common in the east and northeast of India especially in the contiguous Assam - Manipur region. The tree is a heavy producer of pods and can bear up to 500-1500 pods (90-260 kg / plant) depending upon the age and growing condition. The episode of fruiting and pod holding begins with the flowering in mid-August. It continues till mid-October when fresh pods are harvested. The beans are harvested along with stalks for better storage life. A single brunch may hold 8-30 pods and each pod contains 12-18 seeds. A tree can produce more than 15,000 pods, a real hefty amount, in a season! As usual in a megadiverse country like India, it is known by different vernacular names: Sapota in Hindi, Shivalingada mara in Kannada, Unkampinching in Marathi, Khorial in the Assamese. It is also popular in Manipur as Yongchak which is a traditionally valued plant. Both flower and pods are eaten as vegetables, in preparation of Singju, a typical Manipuri salad. They may be mixed with fish and dashed in preparation of local delicacy *Iromba*. For this reason, perhaps, four to five pods sell for a sizable amount in Manipuri markets. Understandably, wealthy families or those with agricultural background gift Yongchak to their daughters during weddings, so that she gets regular income from the tree once it blooms. In other parts, the tender beans are cooked with fish and eaten with rice. Flowers, tender pods, and seeds are also edible and are a better source of proteins, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals compared to other legumes. It is packed with of vitamin C, minerals like Magnesium, Zinc, and Calcium in addition to its rich protein content.

