

Myristica andamanica Hook. f.



Myristica andamanica Hook. f., the wild relative of commercial nutmeg, is apparently a lesser known endemic insular species of the Andaman-Nicobar Islands in the Bay of Bengal, popularly known as 'Jaiphal', belonging to the family Myristicaceae. The species is relatively getting rare in their insular habitats and the IUCN documented the taxon under vulnerable category. *Myristica andamanica* is 8- 25 m tall arborescent dioecious species with small flowers and large dehiscent fruits. Fruits are relatively golden yellow in colour with fine rusty brown pubescence. The fruits ranging from 4.5-6.5 cm × 2.5-3.5 cm and single seeded with prominent bright red aril. The flowering season starts from July to August while fruiting occurs during October to March. The name '*Myristica*' was referred to the first time in the second edition of the '*Genera Plantarum*' published in 1742, where Linnaeus included with single species, 'the nutmeg of commerce'. The epithet '*Myristica*' was derived from the Greek word '*Myristikos*' denoted as 'sweet smelling'. The specific epithet '*andamanica*' represents the type locality of the insular taxon. It is also reported that insular aboriginals of the Andaman-Nicobar Islands such as *Nicobarese* and *Jarawas* are using the species for their health care. The propagation of the species is through seed germination. Mature water sinking seeds soaked for about 24 hours exhibits remarkable germination rate of about 75% with high seedling vigour index.

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