

# Banana

## Varieties

### **Dwarf Cavendish (AAA) :**

It is a popular commercial cultivar grown extensively for **table** and **processing** purpose in the states Maharashtra, Gujarat, Bihar and West Bengal. It is also popular in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. 'Basrai' is the leading commercial variety of Cavendish group and is a leading commercial variety of Maharashtra. The plant stature is Dwarf making it less prone to wind damage. The bunch size, the fruit length and size is quite good though the keeping quality is rather poor. The average bunch weight with 6-7 hands and with about 13 fruits per hand is about 15-25 kg. The thick rind of the fruits retains to some extent the greenish colour even when the fruits are ripe. Gandevi selection known as 'Hanuman' or 'Padarre' is gaining importance inspite of its longer crop duration. The selection yields bunches weighing 55-60 kg. Performs well under light soils with high inputs. In combination with high-density planting and drip irrigation, Dwarf Cavendish is becoming a highly successful cultivar. It is highly susceptible to Sigatoka leaf spot disease in humid tropics restricting its commercial cultivation.

### **Robusta (AAA) :**

It is a semi-tall variety, grown mostly in Tamil Nadu and some parts of Karnataka for **table purpose**. Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. It is a high yielding and produces bunch of large size with well developed fruits. Dark green fruits turn bright yellow upon ripening depending on ripening conditions. Fruit is very sweet with a good aroma. Bunch weighs about 25-30 kg. Requires propping. Fruit has a poor keeping quality leading to a quick breakdown of pulp after ripening, hence not suited for long distance transportation. Robusta is highly susceptible to Sigatoka leaf spot disease in humid tropics.

### **Rasthali (Silk AAB) :**

It is a medium tall variety commercially grown in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Karnataka and Bihar. Its unique fruit quality has made Rasthali popular and a highly prized cultivar for **table purpose**. Fruits are yellowish green throughout their development, but turn pale yellow to golden yellow after ripening. Fruit is very tasty with a good aroma. Longer crop duration, severe susceptibility to *Fusarium* wilt, requirement of bunch cover to protect fruits from sun cracking and formation of hard lumps in fruits make crop production more expensive.

### **Poovan (Mysore AAB) :**

It is a leading commercial cultivar grown throughout the country with location specific ecotypes like palayankodan in Kerala, Poovan in Tamil Nadu, Karpura Chakkarakeli in Andhra Pradesh and Alpan in North Eastern Region. It is generally cultivated as a perennial crop. Tamil Nadu is the leading producer of Poovan cultivar owing to its climatic and marginal soil condition. Poovan is also commercially cultivated for leaf industry throughout Tamil Nadu and in certain parts of Kerala. Fruit is slightly acidic, firm and has typical sour-sweet aroma. Fruits turn to attractive golden yellow on ripening. Medium sized bunch, closely packed fruits, good keeping quality and resistant to fruit cracking is its plus points. But it is highly susceptible to Banana Bract Mosaic Viral (BBMV) disease and Banana Streak Virus, (BSV), which cause considerable reduction in yield.

### **Nendran (AAB) :**

It is a popular variety in Kerala where it is relished as a fruit as well as used for **processing**. Commercial cultivation of Nendran has picked up rapidly in Tamil Nadu in the recent past. Nendran is known to display considerable diversity in plant stature, pseudostem colour, presence or absence of male axis, bunch size, etc. Bunch has 5-6 hands weighing about 12-15 kg. Fruits have a distinct neck with thick green skin turning buff yellow on ripening. Fruits remain as starchy even on ripening. Nendran is highly susceptible to Banana Bract Mosaic Virus (BBMV), nematodes and borers.

### **Red Banana (AAA) :**

Red banana is the most relished and highly prized variety of Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Its commercial cultivation is prominent in Kanyakumari and Tirunelveli districts of Tamil Nadu. It is also popular in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and to some extent in Western and Central India. In Bihar and other regions, it is popular as Lal Velchi while in Karnataka as Chandra Bale. The colour of the pseudostem, petiole, midrib and fruit rind is purplish red. It is a robust plant with bunches weighing 20-30 kg under good management practices. Fruits are sweet, orange yellow coloured and with a pleasant aroma. It is highly susceptible to bunchy top, fusarium wilt and nematodes.

### **Ney Poovan (AB) :**

Ney Poovan is the choicest diploid cultivar, which is under commercial mono cultivation on a large scale especially in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. In Kerala It is grown in backyards and now shifting to large-scale cultivation. Ney Poovan is a slender plant bearing bunches of 15-30 kg after 12-14 months. Dark green fruits turn golden yellow with a very good keeping quality. Fruit is highly fragrant, tasty, powdery and firm. Ney Poovan is tolerant to leaf spot but susceptible to *Fusarium* wilt and banana bract mosaic virus.

### **Virupakashi (AAB) :**

It is an elite variety in South India especially grown for **table purpose** in Palani and Shevroy hills of Tamil Nadu under perennial cultivation. It is a vigorous and hardy variety though not a prolific one. Fruits show a typical curvature, possess a pleasant aroma and delightful taste. Virupakshi has the characteristic flavour only when they are cultivated in higher elevation. In the mixed cultivation it is well suited as a shade plant for young coffee. It has many ecotypes like 'Sirumalai' (grown on hills), 'Vannan', 'Kali' etc. well suited for cultivation in plains. Perennial system of cultivation aggravates Banana Bunchy Top Virus (BBTV).

### **Pachanadan (AAB) :**

It is a popular variety in Tamil Nadu grown especially for its cooling effects in hot tracts in summer. The variety comes up well in marginal soils without any yield reduction. It is well suited as an intercrop in coconut/arecanut garden. The bunch weight ranges from 12-15 kg (after 11-12 months). Pachanadan could be used in the Nendran plantations for gap filling as it comes up for harvest along with Nendran. This variety is tolerant to leaf spot and Banana Bunchy Top Virus (BBTV) diseases, but susceptible to wilt disease.

## **Monthan (ABB) :**

It is a widely cultivated variety for **processing**. Monthan is a fairly tall and robust plant bearing bunches of 18-20 kg after 12 months. Fruits are bold, stocky, knobbed and pale green in colour. The skin is usually green. The new prolific 'Monthan' type clones of economic value namely 'Kanchi Vazhai' and 'Chakkia' are recently becoming popular in Tamil Nadu. Apart from its culinary use of fruits, pseudostem core is a highly relished vegetable with many medicinal properties. Monthan is also cultivated for production of leaves in Trichy and Tanjore districts of Tamil Nadu. It has many desirable qualities like immunity to Banana Bunchy Top Virus (BBTV) diseases, salt tolerance and normal bunch mass even under marginal condition, but it is highly susceptible to *Fusarium* wilt disease.

## **Karpuravalli (ABB) :**

It is a popular variety grown for **table purpose** in medium rich soils. Its commercial cultivation is spread over in Central and Southern districts of Tamil Nadu and Kerala. In Bihar, cultivation is in patches under the name 'Kanthali'. Karpuravalli is a tall, robust plant well suited to marginal lands and soils, produced under low input conditions. It is also the sweetest among Indian bananas. Karpuravalli is occasionally seeded depending on the seasonal variability. Its ash coated golden yellow and sweet fruits have good keeping quality. Karpuravalli is highly susceptible to wilt disease, tolerant to leaf spot disease and well suited for drought, salt affected areas and for low input conditions.

## **Safed Velchi Musa (A B Group) :**

This is considered a good quality fruit for **table purpose** and is cultivated in the Thane, Nasik districts of Maharashtra. It is grown under the shade of arecanut gardens in the South Kanara districts of Karnataka. This variety is medium sized with slender yellowish green pseudostem and can be recognised by the reddish petiole margin, large fruits, very thin and papery rind and white firm flesh that is very sweet. The average bunch weight is about 12 kg with about 150 fruits/bunch. The duration of the variety is about 13 months.

## **Exotic Varieties :**

### **USA**

Dwarf Cavendish, Giant Cavendish, Pisang masak hijau, Ice Cream, 'Enano Gigante, Macho, Orinoco.

### **Brazil**

Robusta, Santa Catarina Silver, Brazilian.

### **China**

Dwarf Cavendish

### **South Africa**

Dwarf Cavendish, Golden Beauty

### **Australia**

Robusta, Williams, Cocos,

### **East Africa, Thailand**

Bluggoe, Maricongo, Common Dwarf

### **Philippines**

Common Dwarf, Philippine Lakatan

### **Taiwan**

Giant Cavendish