

***Caralluma fimbriata* (Roxb). Synonym *Caralluma adscendens* - Its usage in tribal south India.**

C.fimbriata is a succulent, edible cactus that grows freely all over India. It is eaten daily by tribals and native communities throughout the Indian sub-continent.

It has a characteristic bitter-sweet taste that is not unpleasant. I have seen this cactus in use since several decades by local tribes people in Pondicherry and South India, in general. It is eaten raw or cooked as a curry. Usually the tribals break off handfuls of *Caralluma* (about 100 gram chunks of *Caralluma*), extract in it boiling water and add the boiled extract to curries and pastes



The photo shows the typical amount of *Caralluma* consumed, around 100 grams per person.

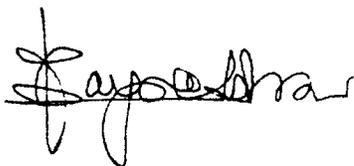
Figure 1 - Tribals in South India, chewing chunks of *Caralluma fimbriata*

Alternatively, the cactus is dried in the sun and stored for future use. Dried chunks of *Caralluma* are boiled in water and the boiled extract is used in curries.

It has been noted that 100 gram chunks of *Caralluma* yield about 10 grams of material on drying.

Caralluma fimbriata has been in use since centuries among local communities and tribals in India. I have also observed tribals offer chunks of *Caralluma fimbriata* as payment to local doctors, who in turn regularly consume *Caralluma* as part of their own diets.

Caralluma fimbriata contains Pregnane glycosides, saponin glycosides, flavonoids and bitter principles. These compounds are common to the *Caralluma* genus in general and are to be found in all other *Caralluma* species that grow in India and other parts of the world.



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