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The lively spice, ginger (*Z. officinale* Rose.), a native of South East Asia is valued as a spice medicine as well as vegetable since very ancient days. Its multipurpose uses and attractive colour (Premature rhizome) makes ginger not only lively and lovely but gorgeous too.

Ginger is cultivated in almost all tropical countries like India, Taiwan, China, The Phillipines, Sierra-Leone, Singapore, Jamaica, Fiji and Nigeria.

In India the spice is mainly grown in the states of Kerala, Orissa, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Sikkim, Meghalaya, Himachal Pradesh, etc. In Kerala as well as in the North-Eastern region of India many local cultivars of ginger are prevalent. These cultivars, about 50 in number, differ considerably for yield and quality features. The important indigenous types of ginger are Ernad-Chernad, Himachal, Maran, Karakkal, Kuruppampadi, Wynad Local, Assam, Nadia, Bajpai, Narasapatam, Zahirabad etc. Most of the cultivars are named after the place of domestication/origin.

In addition to the land races there are five improved varieties of ginger also. 'Suprabha', 'Suravi' and 'Suruchi' are improved ginger varieties from the High Altitude Research Station of Orissa University of Agriculture & Technology, Orissa. Himagiri, is another new ginger variety from Dr. Y.S. Parmar University of Horti-

culture & Forestry, Solan, Himachal Pradesh. "IISR Varada" is the first improved, low fibre, high yielding ginger variety from the Indian Institute of Spices

mutant of the land race 'Rudrapur Local'.

Ginger is traded in different forms around the world such as raw ginger, dry ginger, ginger powder, ginger oil, ginger oleoresin, gingerale, ginger candy, ginger beer, ginger wine, brine ginger, ginger squash and salted ginger.

Product diversification has good scope in ginger especially with immature (premature) ginger rhizome. Immature (premature) ginger possesses attractive baby pink colour (in most case) which gives an added attraction to the end

LIVELY, LOVELY, GORGEOUS GINGER

B. Sasikumar



Immature (premature) rhizomes of 'Varada' with attractive baby pink/crimun colour.

Research, Calicut. Barring the variety 'Suravi', all other improved varieties are developed through germplasm selection in the absence of viable sexual reproduction. (Though most of the ginger varieties flower they do not set seed). 'Suravi' is a

product subject to the processing technique. Detailed study on product diversification and quality aspects of immature (premature) ginger will be rewarding especially in the backdrop of the brightening scenario of ginger export.