

## *Canna indica*

### **Classification**

Kingdom - Plantae  
Subkingdom- Tracheobionta – Vascular plants  
Superdivision- Spermatophyta – Seed plants  
Division -Magnoliophyta – Flowering plants  
Class - Liliopsida – Monocotyledons  
Subclass - Zingiberidae  
Order - Zingiberales  
Family- Cannaceae – Canna family  
Genus -Canna L. – canna  
Species [\*Canna indica\*](#)



*Canna indica*

### **DESCRIPTION:**

The upright (erect) stems (1-2 m tall) are sturdy, hairless (glabrous) and green in colour. The alternatively arranged leaves consist of a stem-clasping sheath at the base and very large, spreading, leaf blade (20-60 cm long and 10-30 cm wide). The leaf blades are elongated or oval (elliptic) in shape but come to a point at the tip (they have acute or acuminate apices). They are hairless (glabrous), have entire margins, and narrow at the base where they join to the top of the leaf sheath.

The flowers can be either red, yellow or occasionally red and yellow (yellow with red spots or vice versa) and are quite showy. They are borne singly or in pairs (monochasial cymes) and arranged into larger branched clusters (with 6-20 flowers) at the tips of the flowering stems. Each flower appears to have five 'petals' but these are actually other floral structures (staminodes and petaloid filaments) that have become modified to imitate petals. The petals are actually the three bract-like structures below these false 'petals' (4-6.5 cm long and 0.4-0.7 cm wide). They are fused together at the base (into a perianth tube 5-15 mm long) and their margins are curved inwards. Each flower has three slightly different types of false 'petals' (three outer staminodes, an inner staminode and a petaloid filament). The three outer staminodes are relatively broad (3.5-6 cm long and 0.5-1.5 cm wide)

while the inner staminode (labellum) is usually somewhat narrower (up to 4-5 cm long and 0.8 cm wide) with its tip bent backwards (it has a recurved apex). The single petaloid filament is narrower again (3-4 mm wide) and has an anther about 10 mm long about half way up one of its sides. Each flower also has three narrow sepals (9-17 mm long and 2-5 mm wide) and their bases are also surrounded by a floral bract (5-30 mm long and 5-15 mm wide) and bracteoles (5-20 mm long and 3-8 mm wide).

The papery capsules (1.5-3 cm long and 1.5-2 cm wide) are oval (ellipsoid) to almost rounded (sub-globose) in shape and are crowned by the persistent sepals. They are initially green or purplish in colour and covered in numerous short projections (they are verrucose), but turn brown as they mature and may lose some or all of their tiny projections. They split open at maturity to release numerous smooth, black, rounded (spherical) or egg-shaped (ovoid) seeds. These seeds are relatively large (5-8 mm long and 4-7 mm wide) and very hard.

#### **MEDICINAL USES:**

The seeds are demulcent. They are mixed with water in a poultice which is placed on the forehead to remedy headaches. They are ground into a powder and used as an anti-infective agent or as a treatment for itches, persistent sores and 'bush yaws.