

A close-up photograph of a wooden spoon resting on a large pile of white arrowroot powder. The powder has a fine, clumpy texture. The wooden spoon is light-colored and shows some texture. The background is a soft, out-of-focus white.

Arrowroot Class

Arrowroot

- *Maranta arundinacea*, or more commonly known as arrowroot, is a tropical plant that derives from South America. The arrowroot powder comes from the rhizomes, or roots of the plant, and is widely known for its culinary, as well as its medicinal purposes. *Maranta arundinacea*, is a species of the genus *Maranta*, and a member of the family *Marantaceae*. It is less commonly known by many other names as well, such as Bermuda Arrowroot, Ararao, Araru, the West Indian Arrowroot, or even the “obedience plant.” Arrowroot is native to parts of western Brazil, as well as Guyana. However, it is also cultivated in Australia, South Africa, the West Indies, and parts of Southeast Asia. Arrowroot was introduced in England in 1732. American archeological studies show evidence of arrowroot powder use dating back to more than 7,000 years ago, being used for food by the Caribbean Arawak people. Did you know that arrowroot used to be used in the paper making process? Back in the early days of carbonless copy paper, arrowroot was actually used because of how fine it is!
- *Maranta arundinacea* is a perennial plant. It has rootstocks that can exceed to over a foot long and grow to .75 inches in diameter. The rootstocks are jointed and covered with loose scales and are yellowish in color. The plant itself actually grows to about two feet tall. It has small white flowers and fruits on it that grow on its many branched stems. The stems have numerous pale green leaves with large ovate blades and long narrow sheaths.
- Arrowroot powder can actually be used in many different products and industries. It can be used for culinary purposes, bath and body products, soap making, skin care, and medicinal benefits. Common bath and body products that can include arrowroot are bath brews, sugar scrubs, bath bombs, natural deodorants, body butters, body powders, lotions, bath fizzies, and many natural cosmetics. Did you know that it has been suggested that the name “arrowroot” comes from the plant working as an antidote for poisons? Specifically from a person being wounded and poisoned by an arrow. When the arrowroot is applied to the wound, it actually draws out the poison.



Growing Conditions

- Like any other plant, *Maranta arundinacea* has its own specific conditions needed for it to grow properly. Being that it is a tropical plant, it grows best in areas ranging in temperature from about 68 to 90 degrees Fahrenheit. It normally grows in areas at sea level and up to about 3,000 feet past sea level. However it can also grow very well near the sea at elevation levels of 200 to 300 feet. If not being grown by the sea, it needs to be in an area with a sufficient water supply throughout the year. Somewhere where if there is a dry season, it only lasts for a very short time. It can be grown in areas with partial sun exposure, with some degree of shade. Arrowroot cannot grow in heavy soils, as it needs an area of slightly acidic, loam soil that is deep and drains easily.
- After being planted, the rhizomes, or roots of the plant typically start to mature about 10 to 11 months later. Since it typically needs to be in a tropical area, the planting should start at the beginning of the “rainy season.” The rhizomes are actually what is normally planted, just little chunks that are about 4 to 7 centimeters long and start to mature when they have reached the 10 to 11 month mark. They are ready to be harvested when the plant is fully grown and the leaves start to die or wilt. When this happens, the plants can be dug out and the rhizomes will be separated from the stem, since the rhizomes are what is actually used to produce the arrowroot powder.
- There are some pests and diseases that can affect the *Maranta arundinacea* as well. There is a bug called the “leaf roller” that can attack the plant. *Maranta arundinacea* can also suffer from rot, and a condition that is called “cigar roots.” Cigar roots happens when possible nutritional deficiencies happen to the rhizomes.



Uses in Industries

Food

- Arrowroot powder can be used as a thickener for many dishes such as soups, puddings, sauces, and even some desserts. Because of its fine texture, arrowroot can allow foods to be cooked at a lower temperature and shorter amounts of times than some starches. This is an advantage when making dishes with eggs like custards. For people who are dieting, arrowroot is very easy to digest and can be used in foods that are low in salt and protein. Arrowroot can also be used in foods like biscuits, cakes, hot sauces, and jelly. It can also be used to make clear fruit gels and works to prevent ice crystals in ice cream. Since it lacks gluten, arrowroot can be used as a replacement to wheat flour for the bread making process.

Bath and Body Products

- Arrowroot powder can be used in many different products and industries. While widely known for its culinary and medicinal purposes, it can also be used for soap making, skin care, and in many bath and body products. When used in natural cosmetics, it works as a thickening agent.
- Common bath and body products that can include arrowroot powder are bath bombs, bath brews, lotions, bath fizzies, sugar scrubs, natural deodorants, body powders, and body butters.
- There are many wonderful skin care benefits to using arrowroot powder. It works to treat many burns and sunburns, as well as drying up many blemishes and rashes. Arrowroot also makes the skin feel soft and silky, and helps to smooth out the skin. Arrowroot also helps to keep the skin hydrated by absorbing moisture into it.



Uses in Industries Cont.

Medicinal

- There are many amazing medicinal benefits to using arrowroot powder. It contains many important minerals that are essential to the body such as zinc, copper, magnesium, manganese, potassium, and phosphorous. Arrowroot also contains many vitamins such as riboflavin, niacin, thiamin, pyridoxine, and pantothenic acid. It is also a good source of folates.
- Arrowroot can be used as a treatment for weight loss, as it is fat free and low in calories.
- For women, arrowroot is very beneficial during pregnancy. It helps to prevent many malformations and defects in the baby. Once the baby is born, arrowroot can even be used as an alternative to breast milk because it is so easily digested.
- For people suffering from Irritable Bowel Syndrome, or IBS, arrowroot helps to soothe the bowels. It can also prevent nausea and diarrhea.
- Within your body, arrowroot helps to regulate your heart rate, maintain proper acid and alkali levels within the body, and also regulates blood pressure.
- Arrowroot can be used as treatment for many wounds and skin conditions, such as small pox and gangrene. Athlete's foot can even be helped with arrowroot, because it helps to control moisture within the foot. It also helps to heal many sores, wounds, and even ulcers.
- Besides being used as an antidote for wound poisoning, arrowroot can also be made into a juice and drunk as an antidote for some vegetable poisons. Mashed rhizomes can even be used as treatment for black spider and scorpion bites.



Other Uses

- In some places the leaves of the *Maranta arundinacea* are actually used as packing material.
- After the arrowroot powder is extracted from the plant, there is a fibrous material that remains. This material can actually be used as feed for cattle.
- Nature's Garden sells [arrowroot powder](#) for external use only. We do not sell it as a food item. The information above talks about how great arrowroot is for many industries, however we only sell it for external use. We provide this data for educational purposes only. Nothing in this article is to be construed as medical advice. Please consult your doctor before using this product or any of this information for treatment purposes.
- Are you wondering how to try out this amazing product as soon as possible? Well make sure to check out all of our awesome [free recipes and classes](#), many of our recipes are actually made with arrowroot powder! Make sure to try out our [Natural Lavender Vanilla Body Powder](#), our [Natural Window Cleaner](#) recipe, or our [Watermelon Emulsified Sugar Scrub!](#)



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