

# *Vigna vexillata* (L.) A. Rich. Cultivated as a Root Crop in Bali and Timor

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## Abstract

*Vigna vexillata* is considered as a pantropical distributed wild species closely related to the cowpea (*Vigna uniculata*) and adapted to infertile soils. The species is occasionally used for its storage roots as well as forage and erosion control plant. The objective of this study was to pursue personal communications that *V. vexillata* has been transformed into a cultivar in Indonesia. Seven Indonesian islands were visited (Java, Bali, Sumba, Flores, Timor, Kalimantan and Sulawesi). Wild *V. vexillata* was found in Java, Bali, Sumba, Flores and Timor, occasionally used as wild 'forest food', and cultivated *V. vexillata* was found in Bali and Timor. Seven cultivars were collected and two of these were made available for the National Botanic Garden of Belgium. The cultivars were primarily cultivated for their storage roots, propagated by seeds, required no scarified seeds for good germination and formed non-dehiscent pods. On-farm root yields of 18–30 t ha<sup>-1</sup> and seed yields of 0.7–1.2 t ha<sup>-1</sup> were estimated. A brief discussion about the common names of wild *V. vexillata* is given and it is proposed to use the name 'tuber cowpea' for *V. vexillata* accessions which are cultivated for their storage roots. The material may be of interest for regions, where the growing season is too short or the rainfall too low for sweet potato and cassava as well as to incorporate cultivar characteristics into wild *V. vexillata* accessions which are used for their storage roots.

**Keywords** Indonesia - Legume root crop - *Vigna uniculata* - *Vigna vexillata* - Wild cowpea - Wild mungbean