

China

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YUNNAN PROVINCE

Xishuangbanna South Western Yunnan

Xishuangbanna
The botanical garden is beside a tributary of the Mekong. Within the tropical rainforest garden there is a Ginger garden. The "showcase" of the species. *Etilingera elatior*, captured an ornamental pond near the center.



Etilingera elatior



Etilingera seed capsule

The Mekong River

The little "Dumbard" is a native bird found in the mountainous hills of Yunnan. They often make a lot of noise at the beginning of the day of the day.



Blue Ginger

The Dai are a tribal people who hand down their knowledge of herbal medicine from one generation to another verbally. While staying with them, I was shown how to rub ordinary cooking Ginger into my forehead as a cure for headache. They also eat, use and make a small delicate ginger they call "blue ginger". It does not taste at all like the blue ginger used in their cooking which is usually a species of *Alpinia*.



Blue Ginger

It is what is called 'blue ginger' by the Dai people of Yunnan.

Jinghong

Along the Mekong to my right is the town of Jinghong; to my left is the large dam which is one of many now spanning this river as it flows through China. Near the Mekong is a glossy olive green and set the muddy brown it was in Laos. Newly planted rubber plantations are reflected in the water like surface. It was here that I found amongst other Gingers *Annonum corymboctyuum*. It was being raised by this unusual black bee.



Annonum corymboctyuum

Dai Homes

The Dai villages, with their "open houses" and plentiful fruit trees seem in perfect harmony with their surroundings. A Dai woman in colorful clothes picks some "bamboo" pods from the blue bamboo tree and carries them to the market. I looked out in the shade beneath the house and water buffalo graze on the side of the road. There is a giant Burmese tree by the village well, surrounded with blossoms.

Royal College of Art

North Western Yunnan

The source of the Mekong lies in Eastern Tibet which adjoins North Western Yunnan. It is in these regions that the hardest species of Ginger can be found. Of these, *Hedyochium* is a good example. It was introduced from the mountains and a rare find in North Western Yunnan. One of the last century many species of the genus *Hedyochium* have been introduced to Britain by British plant hunters.

Shangri-la

Shangri-la is usually the lower drive through the high mountain passes from Tibet Leping Gorge. It is much more Tibetan in feel and Gingers are scarce here, due to the high altitude and freezing temperatures in winter.



Lijiang North Western Yunnan

Lijiang

On the eastern slopes of Jade Dragon Snow Mountain lies Gushui plain. For 200 years this has been a popular tourist ground for botanists. In 1908 it is the highest point on earth to find Gingers. *Roscoea humeana* and *R. forestii* are both found here briefly in spring. On the other side of the peak lies Tiger Leaping Gorge on which I found no trace of these dairy like flowers.

What's always for the thing to look the best...
Tibet...
The best species...
The best species...
The best species...



Costus sp.

North Western Yunnan

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Hedyochium 'Dr. Moy'



Hedyochium sp.

Roscoea humeana and *R. forestii*
These groups of plants...
The plants...
The plants...

Roscoea humeana

Roscoea forestii

