

Nepalese Trumpet Flower

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The Flower

The Nepal Trumpet Flower (*Beaumontia grandiflora*) is an evergreen climbing vine, which blossoms a beautiful white bell-shaped flower in contrast to its leafy stems which grow soft but wax textured dark green leaves. The flower holds significant potential as an export product from Nepal to assist local farmers. This flower had been known for its value in the cut flower market for as much as \$50 American for a 10'' pot (plant inside cut to fit). At this high market value, the plant already proves to be a viable investment as 500 seeds cost \$28.50 in the commercial market. (Gardino Nursery Corp., 2014) The rough wood trunk of the vine wraps and grows around its anchor and can reach up to 10 meters in height, while also sprawling horizontally for as much space that's provided. The plant is also considerably durable as it can endure light frosts and latches onto secure objects such as fences or the sides of buildings for stability, also the rough vine is strong enough to support the plants weight along a wall. The plant grows well with a balanced amount of sunlight, and being native to the region of South Asia it is grows wonderfully in the climate. (Ahmad, 2014) The middle strip of Nepal, defined as the "Hill region" , is perfect for the *Beaumontia grandiflora* specifically because of the availability of growing space along terrace walls that are often underutilized. The vines will take up unused vertical space while other agricultural crops can be grown on the horizontal flat of the terrace.

Impact on the Community

This plant will be able to provide a sustainable source of income for a small village which depends on terrace farmland. A larger population could also cultivate a ground growing crop for export as well as the vine for extra income to further develop their area. The seeds for the plant should be sewn in a pot in early spring, maturing them for summer growth along a wall. (Top Tropics LLC., 2014) While the leaves and unpicked flowers will die in the winter, the vines remain evergreen and will sprout new leaves and flowers next season. Once a community has grown the flower over a vast area, such as

an entire terrace wall, the vines will reproduce the flowers each season without replanting seeds in the same area. Seeds are available for harvest once the plant has matured. This means seeds can also be sold to other locals or used to expand their existing crop. The plants can also be propagated and sold entirely to its new destination. The rooting of the plant is the most difficult part of production, however seeds are usually planted less than half an inch below ground, so the roots aren't more than a few inches deeper than that. (Top Tropics LLC., 2014) This chore can be greatly simplified with simple gardening tools such as hand spades or heels. The plant ensues vigorous growth and could even grow too much, to the point where they start to grow over the terrace ledge and begin leaching water, light, and nutrients from crops growing on the flat. These plants must be kept tamed, which could prove difficult without tools because of its thick wood-like vine stem, as well as women and children cultivating mostly compared to men. (International Funds for Agricultural Development, 2014)

Export Potential

The domestic flower market in Canada is on the decline due to the downfall of many domestic producers due to outsourcing. Canada has implemented a free trade agreement with Columbia, another developing nation who exports or has the potential to export flowers. The Columbian flower growers are able to grow their product, produce it, ship it, and stock it in Canada, cheaper than Canadians. (Gamez, 2014) Nepal has this same potential, assuming it can compete with other developing countries in the market that would sell at the same price. They will however have a huge advantage in that the "Herald's Trumpet" flower is indigenous to their hilly and mountainous region. Canadian flower exports to the U.S. have also fallen from \$500 million to \$300 million from 2002 to 2010, inferring that low cost producers are beating them in exports as well as on a domestic level. (Gamez, 2014) There is a very viable market for villages to establish themselves in as cut flower producers. The only problem with outsourcing for agri-products is that international transportation costs are much higher than regular domestic highway delivery. The Nepal Trumpet flower cuts must be packaged and transported carefully

across land and sea. However there are agencies such as the United Nations extension - *International Funds for Agricultural Development* (IFAD) which help teach, support, and invest in these communities in order to accelerate their growth and production. Nepal has been partnered with IFAD since 1978 and continues to work with them to this day. (International Funds for Agricultural Development, 2014) While the goal is to create a self-sustainable market, kick starting the trade is an effective way to increase production to get the business to a point of sustainability.

References

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