

RESEARCH NEWS

**CULTIVATION OF SUKIRI AND KANKOORIA
MUSHROOMS FOR PREPARATION OF DELICIOUS DISHES**

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Recently, two local edible mushrooms, namely, "Sukiri" (*Calocybe zylanica*) and "Kankooria" (*Auricularia mesentrica pers*) were collected from three different locations in Sri Lanka. Sukiri mushrooms were collected from Madawala-Ulpotha, and Pussallawa, and Kankooria from Hantana. The fruit bodies of Sukiri mushrooms consist of a milky white cap with a thick stalk of about 10-18 cm in length. Kankooria mushrooms, first recorded from Sri Lanka in 1907, produce sessile, deeply cupped or ear-shaped fruit bodies of about 5-10 cm in width. Mature fruit bodies are dark, purplish and brown in color. Both mushrooms are known to be edible.

When growing Sukiri mushrooms, paddy straw was cut into 10-12 cm pieces, soaked in clean water for 45 minutes, and sterilized by keeping in hot water for one hour. The sterilized straw was spawned and filled up to 30-50 cm in polypropylene bags of gauge 150. Tightly closed bags were maintained at a temperature of 28-35°C. After completion of the spawn run, the bags were cased with sterilized casing soil prepared with top loam soil and rotten cow dung in the proportion of 1:1. After 15-20 days, mature fruit bodies were obtained, at a relative humidity of 80-90%. The mushrooms were harvested when the cap diameter was around 6-10 cm wide.

Kankooria can be grown artificially on sawdust. Fresh dried saw dust (100 kg) was mixed with rice bran (10 kg), CaCO₃ (2kg), Soy flour (500 gm), MgSO₄ (200gm), and correct amount of water. The mixture was filled in 18-36 cm polypropylene bags of gauge 150. The open ends of the bags were tightly closed with cotton waste plugs and steam sterilized. These sterilized bags were inoculated with spawn and kept in the dark for incubation for 30-40 days until the mycelium penetrated to the bottom. After 3-4 weeks, primordia of fruit bodies began to appear. Daily watering was done. In another 8-10 days, mushrooms were mature enough to pick. Altogether, a total of 6.0 Kg of Sukiri mushrooms were harvested from 10 kg of paddy straw during a period of 2 months, while 7.2 kg of Kankooria mushrooms were collected from 10 kg saw dust in a period of 10 weeks. The biological efficiency of both mushrooms ranged from 60-70%. Since Sukiri mushrooms require relatively higher temperatures ranging between 25-35°C for growth, it appears to be

highly suitable for dry zone conditions. Conversely, Kankooria mushrooms which prefer moderate temperatures are more suitable for the wet or intermediate wet zone where the temperature varies between 20- 25°C.

The nutritive value of both mushrooms was found to contain considerable amounts of proteins, vitamins and fiber. Few dishes were prepared with these domesticated mushrooms. 'Dried mushroom sambol' and 'Kankooria soup' were some of these delicious dishes tasted. These mushrooms have a great potential in Sri Lanka as a money – spinner, as well as a delicious food.