

Feel the touch of

Bih or Bhut Jolokia

The hottest chilli on earth



Bih jolokia, botanically known as *Capsicum chinense* Jacq. is extensively cultivated in North Eastern Region of India especially in the states of Assam, Nagaland and Manipur. It is also known by other names like *Bhut jolokia*, *Borbih jolokia*, *Naga jolokia*, *Nagahari*, *Naga Morich*, *Raja mirchi* etc. It has a long standing association with ethno-agricultural activities of people of this region. Vedic and several other ancient literatures also describe its use in traditional medicine for curing many ailments. The local inhabitants commonly use this chilli for making pickles and adding hotness to non-vegetarian food stuffs.

The Uniqueness

Recently, this chilli has been officially recognised as the "hottest chilli on earth" by the name *Bhut Jolokia* which is nothing but mere synonyms of *Bih jolokia*. It has a Scoville Heat Unit (SHU) of 8,55,000 [Reported by DRL, Tezpur, Assam (India) in the journal *Current Science*, 79: 287-8]. We also recorded a slightly higher SHU level of 10,41,427 in *Bih jolokia* through HPLC analysis of the sample collected during summer of 2004. Other renowned hot chillies like *Red Savina Habanero* (5,77,000 SHUs), *Thai Chillies* (1,00,000 SHUs), *Jalapeno* or Italian *Peperoncino* (below 5000 SHUs) stand much below the hotness level of *Bih jolokia*. Existence of a very high level of pungency in *Bih jolokia* of North East India may be ascribed undoubtedly to the genetic factor. Additionally, the unique soil and climatic conditions of this region perhaps provide the best possible environment for expression of the full potential. We have got doubts that creating artificially similar environment elsewhere in the world may not be successful in exploiting the very inherent uniqueness of our *Bih jolokia* (or *Bhut jolokia*, *Naga jolokia*, *Naga morich*, *Raja mirchi*.....).

Commercial Significance

Due to its extra-ordinary pungency level, it is especially suitable for preparation of 'oleoresin capsicum' as well as extraction of capsaicin. Very high capsaicin output per unit weight of dry powder makes it possible to lower down the cost of extraction of capsaicin from *Bih jolokia*. Additionally, dark red skin also makes it a viable source for 'oleoresin paprika'.

Our Efforts

The occurrence of high cross pollination leads to formation of variants within *Bih jolokia*. In order to maintain the varietal purity, we are taking extra care in its seed production through continuously selecting better offsprings in each generation.

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Our products:

We produce high quality whole dried fruits, flakes and powder from garden fresh *Bih jolokia* pods. We are taking up a project to market paste/mashed forms in retort pouches which will be available shortly.

Some morphological characters of *Bih jolokia*

Plant height	45-120 cm
Stem color	Green
Leaf color	Green
Leaf length	10.65-14.25 cm
Leaf width	5.4-7.5 cm
Pedicels/axil	2
Corolla color	Yellow green
Anther color	Pale blue
Annular constriction	Present below calyx
Fruit color at maturity	Red
Fruit shape	Sub-conical to conical
Fruit length	5.95-8.54 cm
Fruit width at shoulder	2.5-2.95 cm
Fruit weight	6.95-8.97 g
Fruit surface	Rough, uneven
Seed color	Light brown
1000 seed weight	0.41-46 g
Seeds/fruit	19.22-34.15
Hypocotyl color	Green
Cotyledonous leaf shape	Deltoid