

INTRODUCTION.

The genus Xanthosoma, cultivated clones of which are locally termed tanniers, has so far received very little attention in the West Indies, though tanniers are potentially a very useful crop. Tanniers constitute a valuable source of starch, and may be used in the same variety of ways as are potatoes. In addition, they can be made into a flour, which is reported by Quisumbing (16) to be more palatable than that of cassava, and has no trace of hydrocyanic acid. The leaves may be used in salad, preferences being for young unopened leaves, and stalks may also be used if they are first peeled (19). Analysis of proteins, fat, starch and sugar, indicate that the food value of tanniers does not differ greatly from that of other tropical root-crops, or from Irish Potatoes (17).

In addition to the above qualities, tanniers are resistant to drought and other adverse climatic conditions, will store for much longer periods than dasheens, and produce a high yield of tubers, which may be as much as two to four times that of the potato. (3), (1) (14).

A genus so potentially valuable to the West Indies is worthy of attention. Collection, description and classification of the clones growing in the islands of the Eastern Caribbean has been started, and disease resistant, heavy yielding clones bearing good quality tubers and suitable to local environment are to be selected.