

# FGCU Food Forest

## Plant Database

### Banana (*Musa acuminata*)

**Origin:** Southeast Asia

**Description:** Large herbaceous flowering plant that produces berries

**Harvest:** June-March; multiple

year long in south Florida

**Flower:** Spring to Summer

**Tolerance:** Many varieties are cold hardy to 25°F; moderate drought



**General Description:** Bananas are evergreen perennials (not trees) that grow from corms underground, produce a large inflorescence, and berries (bananas). There are many different types of bananas, but *Musa acuminata* are in the Cavendish subgroup, and the *Musa acuminata* in the FGCU Food Forest are “Dwarf Cavendish”. Basically, the Food Forest bananas are miniture versions of the Cavendish type found at grocery stores, typically imported from Costa Rica or Peru.

- **Native Origin:** Southeast Asia; probably Malesia and mainland Indochina.
- **General History:** Bananas have been cultivated for tens of thousands of years, but *Musa acuminata* varieties were spread to the rest of Asia and Africa from somewhere in the Philippines about 4000 years ago. Other banana species were spread from south Asia to eastern Africa (modern day Ethipoia region) as far back as 40,000 years ago. Over the last 4000 years, many subspecies have resulted from hybridizations between *Musa acuminata* and other *Musa* species. Throughout pre-Colombian times, *Musa acuminata* and other banana species were further spread throughout Asia and Africa, then in post-Colombian years, to south and central America and the Caribbean.
- **Distrubution:** Tropics and subtropics worldwide; grown commercially and in home gardens in South, Central, and North America, southeast Asia, Oceania, and Africa.

- **Season of Harvest:** April-September.
- **Culinary Uses:** Bananas are typically eaten raw once ripened, or are fried when still green. Bananas are used in a variety of dessert dishes and smoothies, but are commonly eaten raw once they have ripened up.

<b>Bananas</b>	
<b>Scientific Classification</b>	
Kingdom:	Plantae
Clade:	Angiosperms
Clade:	Monocots
Clade:	Commelinids
Order:	Zingiberales
Family:	Musaceae
Genus:	<i>Musa</i>
Species:	<b><i>M. acuminata</i></b>

#### **Sources**

<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/mg040>

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