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**Ben Zur et al.**

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(54) **CURCUMA PLANT NAMED ‘THAI SUPREME’**

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(56) **References Cited**  
**PUBLICATIONS**

UPOV-ROM GTITM Computer Database, GTI-JOUVE retrieval software 2001/01, citations for ‘Thai Supreme’ 2001.\*

\* cited by examiner

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A distinct cultivar of Curcuma plant named ‘Thai Supreme’, characterized by its compact plant habit with flowers positioned at or just above the foliage; upright and somewhat outwardly arching habit; freely branching growth habit; early and freely flowering; and purple-colored flower bracts.

**1 Drawing Sheet**

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**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

The present Invention relates to a new and distinct cultivar of Curcuma plant, botanically known as *Curcuma alismatifolia*, and hereinafter referred to by the cultivar name Thai Supreme.

The new cultivar is a product of a planned and controlled breeding program conducted by the Inventors in Thailand. The objective of the breeding program is to create compact Curcuma cultivars with unique and attractive flower bract color and shape. The new cultivar originated from a deliberate cross by the Inventors between two unidentified selections of *Curcuma alismatifolia*. The cultivar Thai Supreme was discovered and selected by the Inventors as a plant within the progeny of the stated cross in a controlled environment in Thailand in September, 1997.

Asexual propagation of the new cultivar by tissue culture of meristems and by rhizome divisions in Tirat Yehuda, Israel, has shown that the unique features of this new Curcuma plant are stable and reproduced true to type in successive generations of asexual propagation.

**SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

The new Curcuma has not been observed under all possible environmental conditions. The phenotype may vary somewhat with variations in environment such as temperature, light intensity, fertilizer rate, irrigation amount and frequency, and/or propagation procedures without, however, any variance in genotype.

The following traits have been repeatedly observed and are determined to be the unique characteristics of ‘Thai Supreme’. These characteristics in combination distinguish ‘Thai Supreme’ as a new and distinct cultivar:

1. Plants of the new Curcuma are compact with inflorescences positioned at or just above the foliage.
2. Plants of the new Curcuma are upright and somewhat outwardly arching.
3. Plants of the new Curcuma are freely branching.

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4. Plants of the new Curcuma are early and freely flowering.

5. Plants of the new Curcuma have purple-colored flower bracts.

6. Plants of the new Curcuma produce about four to six rhizomes per plant.

Plants of the new Curcuma differ from plants of the parent selections in the following characteristics:

1. Plants of the new Curcuma are much more compact than plants of the parent selections.

2. Plants of the new Curcuma have much smaller leaves than plants of the parent selections.

3. Leaves of plants of the new Curcuma are not as upright as leaves of plants of the parent selections. Plants of the new Curcuma are more outwardly arching than plants of the parent selections which are more upright and erect.

4. Plants of the new Curcuma are more freely branching and more freely flowering than plants of the parent selections.

5. Plants of the new Curcuma have a more rapid growth rate and flower about two weeks earlier than plants of the parent selections.

6. Plants of the new Curcuma have purple-colored flower bracts whereas plants of the parent selections have light pink-colored flower bracts.

Plants of the new Curcuma differ from plants of the cultivar Thai Beauty, disclosed in U.S. Plant Patent application Ser. No. 09/569,357, in the following characteristics:

1. Plants of the new Curcuma are taller than plants of the cultivar Thai Beauty.

2. Plants of the new Curcuma are more freely flowering than plants of the cultivar Thai Beauty.

3. Plants of the new Curcuma and the cultivar Thai Beauty differ in flower bract coloration.

4. Inflorescences of plants of the new Curcuma are positioned at or just above the foliage whereas inflores-

cences of plants of the cultivar Thai Beauty are above the foliage.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PHOTOGRAPH

The accompanying colored photograph illustrates the overall appearance of the new cultivar, showing the colors as true as it is reasonably possible to obtain in colored reproductions of this type. Colors in the photograph may differ slightly from the color values cited in the detailed botanical description which accurately describe the actual colors of the new *Curcuma*. The photograph comprises a top perspective view of a typical plant of 'Thai Supreme'.

#### DETAILED BOTANICAL DESCRIPTION

The following observations and measurements were recorded on plants grown in Tirat Yehuda, Israel in polyethylene-covered greenhouses and under conditions which closely approximate those used in commercial horticultural practice. During the production of these plants, day temperatures ranged from 25 to 40° C., night temperature ranged from 20 to 28° C., relative humidity was about 60 to 70%, and light level ranged from 70,000 to 100,000 lux. Plants used for this description were grown as single rhizomes and were about 3.5 months old.

In the following description, color references are made to The Royal Horticultural Society Colour Chart except where general terms of ordinary dictionary significance are used. Numerical measurements represent averages from typical plants of 'Thai Supreme'.

Botanical classification: *Curcuma alismatifolia* cultivar Thai Supreme.

Parentage:

*Female and male parents.*—Unidentified selections of *Curcuma alismatifolia*, not patented.

Propagation:

*Type.*—By tissue culture of meristems or by rhizome divisions.

*From tissue culture, time to initiate roots.*—About 20 days at 25 to 30° C.

*From tissue culture, time to produce a rooted liner.*—About 60 days at 25 to 30° C.

*Rooting characteristics.*—Freely branching; cream-colored.

*Number of rhizomes produced per plant.*—About 4 to 6.

*Rhizome diameter.*—About 1.75 cm.

Plant description:

*Growth habit.*—Compact; upright, and somewhat outwardly arching; broad inverted triangle. Very freely branching with about 13 shoots forming from a single rhizome. Appropriate for 12 to 15-cm containers; typically one rhizome per container. Used as a potted plant and also as a garden plant.

*Plant height.*—About 45 cm.

*Plant diameter (area of spread).*—About 27.5 cm.

*Growth rate.*—Rapid growth rate.

*Crop time.*—About 3.5 months are required to produce a finished plant in a 12 to 15-cm container from a single rhizome.

*Leaf description.*—Arrangement: Rosette. Shape: Elliptic. Apex: Narrowly acute. Margin: Entire. Length, mature leaves: About 45 cm. Width, mature leaves: About 27.5 cm. Aspect: Initially upright, then outwardly arching. Texture: Smooth. Color, upper and lower surfaces: 147A to 147B.

Inflorescence description:

*Arrangement.*—About 13 terminal inflorescences develop from a single rhizome. Inflorescences are dense spikes with numerous bracts and bracteole flowers in bract axils. Inflorescences persistent.

*Time of flowering, time to flower.*—In Israel, plants from rhizomes planted in early May will start flowering about 3 months later in early August and will continue to flower until November, Flowering continuous.

*Inflorescence longevity.*—Inflorescences last about 23 days on the plant and about 7 days as a cut flower.

*Rate of inflorescence opening.*—Inflorescences are open about five days after the stage of the bud showing color.

*Fragrance.*—None detected.

*Inflorescence size.*—Length: About 10 cm. Diameter: About 4 cm.

*Flowers.*—Length: About 3 cm. Diameter: About 1.2 cm. Shape: Zygomorphic with one upper petal, two lateral petals and one lower petal. Color: Upper petal: Upper surface, 90B, with white, close to 155D, veins; lower surface, 155D. Lateral and lower petals: Upper surface, 155D with 90B towards the margin; lower surface, 155D.

*Flower bracts.*—Quantity: About 12 per inflorescence. Shape: Almost circular. Apex: Rounded. Margin: Entire. Texture: Thick, leathery, glabrous, waxy. Length: About 5 cm. Width: About 4 cm. Color: Upper surface: Initially green, then becoming purple, 81B; apex, reddish. Lower surface: Initially green, then becoming purple, 81B, apex, brownish.

*Peduncle.*—Length: About 17.5 cm. Angle: Upright, erect. Color: 144B.

*Seed.*—Length: About 3.5 mm. Diameter: About 2.5 mm. Shape: Oblong. Color: 168A. Germination percentage: Less than 40 percent.

Disease/insect resistance: Plants of the new *Curcuma* grown in commercial greenhouses have not shown any unusual susceptibility to pathogens or insects common to *Curcuma*.

Low temperature tolerance: Plants of the new *Curcuma* will tolerate temperatures as low as 5° C.

It is claimed:

1. A new and distinct cultivar of *Curcuma* plant named 'Thai Supreme', as illustrated and described.

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