

1. *L. thuisto* Hewitson, 1861
 i. *L. t. sawaja* Frusstorfer - Myanmar, Mergui, Thailand.
- (5) *Paralaxita* Eliot, 1978
 1. *P. telesia* Hewitson, 1865
 i. *P. t. bouletti* Fruhstorfer - ? Mergui, Thailand.
 2. *P. orphna* Boisduval, 1836
 i. *P. o. laocoon* de Niceville - Myanmar to peninsular Malaya.
- (6) *Taxila* Doubleday, 1847
 1. *T. haquinus* Fabr., 1793
 i. *T. h. fasciata* Moore - Myanmar, N Thailand, Mergui.
- (7) *Stiboges* Butler, 1876
 1. *S. nymphidia* Butler, 1876
 i. *S. n. nymphidia* Butler - Assam to peninsular Malaya.
- (Concluded).

Flowering Teas

RACHEL CHITRA and APARNA DESIKAN

1. Flowering teas were traditionally sourced from China, but are now being made out of India.
2. Apart from Camomille and Jasmine Pearl, over 100 varieties of flowering teas are available in the market.
3. Ornamental tea varieties like Silver-tip and Golden tip which contain anti-oxidants, are purchased by hospitality majors.
4. These teas require 3-5 minutes steeping for the flower petals to unfurl.
5. Flowering teas take 15 mins to make, as the bundle takes a while to open.
6. Care should be taken to brew the tea the right way up or flower could bloom upside down.

Fancy a little cottage with a farm in your teacup? Or may be a hillock overgrown with a profusion of flowers? Flowering teas or display teas that burst into beautiful landscapes on steeping in boiling water have become all the rage. Packaged in silken bags and with whiffs of exotic scents, flowering teas are slowly seeing fanciers in the domestic market as more people enjoy their 'blooming' teas, say dealers.

Terming these living artworks 'a feast for the eyes,' Anjoo Tiwari, owner of cafe *Thirstea Teateria*, says creating them is as much fun as drinking. "Flowering teas are made by wrapping bundles of dried tea leaves around one or more dried flowers into a bulb and letting them dry. When steeped in boiling water, the bulb unfurls like a flower in bloom. Usually flowers like globe amaranth, chrysanthemum, jasmine, lily" says Tiwari, who runs her cafe in Jaipur.

Flowering teas have exotic names to suit their flamboyant nature—from milky sweetpea tea to starlight chamomile tea to Chang moon flower tea—the names range from quaint to bizarre. "I stock Chang moon flower which I usu-

ally sell in packs of 18 leaves for Rs 2,000. But that's the retail price and there are other teas that are costlier," says Vishwam of retailer *Av Life Care* in Bangalore.

Display teas apparently give good value for money and can be reused for 15 days. "Each bundle can be used 3 times a day. And there's very little dilution in taste, says Vishwam. For some the selling point is the nutrient value. "Just like green teas, flowering teas are supposed to act as antioxidants, control cholesterol, loss weight and improve digestion," adds Vishwam. As to the target base, Ratan Tata-backed *Tea box* sells flowering tea to aspirational customers who buy it for its visual appeal. "Our target base has residential customers and high-end salons for the ornamental value," says Kaushal Dugar, founder of *TeaBox*.

As the flavour is not predictable, some tea connoisseurs prefer to stay away from them. "I'd say it is an acquired taste. We've had to convince our regulars to give it a try as there isn't a lot of awareness about flowering teas. Then again the tea's flavour can differ, based on the flowers used, but the base notes are pretty similar and there are some strong adherents to display teas," says *Thirstea Teateria*'s Tiwari.

Places such as Gangtok, Darjeeling and Kochi, which attract tourists, are hotspots for display trade consumption. "Developing urban spaces such as Rajkot, Pune, NCR, Gurugram and Noida are also seeing increasing traction, more than cities such as Mumbai, Delhi and Bengaluru," says *TeaBox*'s Dugar.

"It is mostly those with higher disposable income, who spend on ornamental, display tea. As the process involves manual labour, with a person spending 15 to 30 minutes to make one roll, flowering tea is price sensitive and one kilo may cost anywhere between Rs 5000 to Rs 50,000. As a trend, it is slowly catching up in India, whereas in Japan and Taiwan, where it originated, the market is already saturated," says Dugar.