

# Biodiversity and Utilization of Kava (*Piper methysticum* Forst.) of the community: Fiji and Merauke, Papua-Indonesia

by:

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## Abstract

Biodiversity of Kava (*Piper methysticum* Forst.) in Merauke has 5 cultivars and in Fiji it has 14 cultivars. The utilization of roots and stems from cultivars of Kava plant in the island of Viti Levu, the Vanua Levu and Ovalau islands, and in the ethnic of Marind in Merauke Papua Indonesia are the same to making drinks. That kind of drink is always used in ritual gatherings, and can also be used in everyday regular drink, usually at night time before going to bed. Fijian community used the dried roots and the stems by being dried up on the sun shines or being dried up on fire, but in the community of Marind ethnic they used the roots and stems from fresh plants. In Fiji, this particular plant is sold publicly at markets, shops, supermarkets and Kava café in its dried forms. It even has café shops specially for Kava that sells Kava drink for \$FJ 2 per cup. In Merauke, the people do not publicly sell Kava plant. It is very rare to find Kava sold at wet markets, shops, and café in the City of Merauke. We need to see people who own Kava garden and buy the Kava from them. Kava drinks processed by Marind ethnic people is the chewing of roots and stems that's Kava extract mix with Saliva and spitted out and filtered by using natural tools such as coconut fibers and put in the spot. In Fiji the drinks processed are already more modern using powder machine and some iron tools. The processing of Kava drinks by Fijian community were the same as those of Marind community, but because chewing the Kava can spread up disease, the Fijian people tried to use iron tools and machines to make the powders of Kava. Kava is already scale industrialized by Taki Mai company in Levuka, Ovalau Island operated since 2014. The products of "Taki Mai" are Kava powder for produce pills and is exported to US to produce some beverage drinks and juices. In a week, this company can produce 1 ton of Kava powder.

Key words: Biodiversity, Utilization, Kava, Fiji, Papua-Indonesia