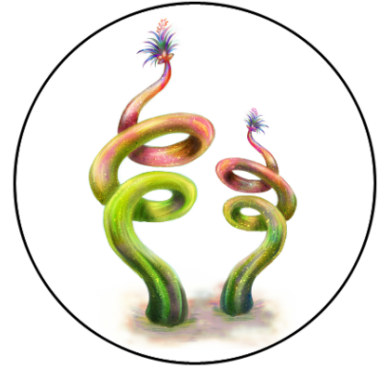


# HILSUNY

- ▶ **Height:** 1.5ft
- ▶ **Classification:** Eccentric plants
- ▶ **Life expectancy:** Annual



The hilsuny is a succulent plant that grows in a spiral shape and is most often used by Kaleidian neolithics for its wax. It prefers areas with easy access to water, such as parts of the desert that generate relatively large amounts of dew, and river banks.

It is named after the Arabic word for 'spiral' - hilzuni.

## Physiology

Hilsuny is an annual plant that grows over the course of one year, before dying, drying out in the sun, and usually being blown away. Like all eccentric plants it reproduces via spores, which grow on the underside of the leaves which grow at its tip. The leaves grow in a variety of colours and the spores develop within sporophytes that protrude from the leaves. The plant appears to do this to attract the attention of animals, which may chew the leaves and their sporophytes off before taking them away, where they can germinate away from the parent plant.



The plant, therefore, does not rely on its leaves, which are ultimately sacrificial, and has adapted to photosynthesize using its stem instead. The stem contains chlorophyll so it is this part of the plant, not the leaves, that do most of the work of photosynthesis. As the plant grows older it develops a red tip.

Its short lifespan means that it must complete its entire growth cycle in one year, and its main survival challenge is water. As a result, it grows in areas where water is relatively easily available - wherever dew collects in the biggest quantity in deserts and at the edges of rivers.

However, it is adapted to drier environments so an overabundance of water can kill this plant.

## **Medical Conditions**

There are no current medical conditions associated with hilsuny.

## **Geographical Distribution**

This plant is adapted to microclimates within arid environments. Look out for them in deserts with areas where dew is more common, and on river beds.

## **Position in Ecosystem**

Hilsuny is edible, but consumption is not recommended in large amounts. Few animals, if any, can stomach much of it: larger animals have difficulty eating the flesh inside without the skin, which is bitter, and smaller animals find biting through the skin difficult (and must cope with the bitterness).

## **History**

Hilsuny has value for the mukash as a source of wax, so it has already earned a place in history as a positive contributor to the mukashs' survival and capacity to trade water. They use it to line the insides of the containers they use to collect water, and to coat the threads they use to make condensation fans and nets.

## Culture

Hilsuny has relevance to Kaleidan culture on two fronts: as a food source (albeit something of a last-resort food item), and as a source of wax, which allows the mukash to waterproof their water vessels and string.

## Food

Hilsuny is a food source, although somewhat maligned for its flavour. It is also difficult to carry in particularly large quantities due to its shape, and the need to peel its skin to get to the edible flesh inside. It is savoury, and tastes fresh but sour, like green beans over-flavoured with lemon juice.

## Politics

While hilsuny wax is helpful for optimising the processes around water-collection and storage, it is usually not vital enough to prompt political disputes or to become a basis for trade. In the dryer parts of Kaleida where water-gathering must be optimised, hilsuny is common enough that the mukash have no problems with scarcity of this plant (and therefore its wax).

The plant's unpleasant taste reduces the risk that other species will interrupt the mukashs' supply by eating it, and the wax itself lasts for long enough between coatings, and is theoretically storable enough, that a new supply is seldom needed urgently enough to create problems.

## 💰 Economy 💰

Hilsuny has its uses, especially in water-farming, but only the mukash tend to be aware of its use in the water-gathering process, and the plant is freely available enough that trading hilsuny to the mukash would be fairly unrewarding. The greatest value a mukash might find in such a trade would be the convenience of being spared the labour and discomfort of gathering it.

With that said, the wax optimises water-collection, and water is the currency of the mukash, so as such it has value, especially in areas where water yields are lower.

While hilsuny cannot grow dark blue as the image on the right suggests, plants with a bluer appearance tend to have a thicker wax coating and are therefore of greater value.



### Medicine

Consumption of large quantities of hilsuny is not recommended as this can induce stomach pains, vomiting, and diarrhea. Beyond its tendency to irritate stomachs however, it is harmless - with the disclaimer that vomiting and diarrhea and the resulting dehydration can be more dangerous in arid environments.

### Technology

The mukash use hilsuny wax to coat the string they use to make air wells and other condensation-collection devices, and the containers they use for water storage. They do this by burning hilsuny spirals over a fire, scraping off and collecting the white layer that forms on its skin, melting it, and dipping string into it or pouring some into a water-storage vessel.

### Construction

As above re: air wells, condensation fans, and other dew-gathering devices.

## **Credits**

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~Hayley, The Character Consultancy