PLANT FACT SHEET

Imperata cylindrica (L.) Raeuschel

GENUS *Imperata* **FAMILY** Poaceae

COMMON NAMES Blady grass, Cottonwool grass, Kunai grass

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Flowers, Leaves, Root, Manna, Rhizome, Root - tea

The young unopened flower is eaten raw. They are sometimes eaten as a potherb or fried or put into soups.
The runners contain starch. This is sweet and can be chewed or eaten and has been used for making beer.
The plant is the source of an edible manna.
The rhizomes are mixed with sugar to make a drink.

DESCRIPTION

A grass which keeps growing from year to year. It has rhizomes. The stems are smooth. They are hairy at the nodes. The leaves are flat and somewhat erect. They are 50 cm long. The flowers are silvery white panicles. They can be 20 cm long. Imperata cylindrica is usually 1 m tall. and Imperata exaltata is 2m.

HABITAT

It is a tropical plant. They occupy very large areas of open space in the Philippines. Very common and widely distributed. It can stand light frosts. It often grows in sandy habitats and along streams. It can survive frequent burning. It can grow in salty soils. It grows from sea level to 2,100 m above sea level. It needs good light. It can grow in arid places. It suits hardiness zones 8-12. In Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed or by division of the clump.

Harvesting and Seed Production

The whole plant is pulled up to harvest the rhizomes.

NOTES

It is used in medicine in Indonesia. There are 6-10 Imperata species. It is very invasive.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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