PLANT FACT SHEET

Hordeum vulgare L.

GENUS *Hordeum* **FAMILY** Poaceae

COMMON NAMES Barley, Pearl Barley, Six Rowed Barley

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Cereal, Seeds - tea

The grains are eaten. They are mixed with wheat for chappatis. They are also used in soups. They are also used for bread and breakfast cereals. They have a low gluten content.
The seed are also soaked until they sprout and produces malt. This is used for alcohol production. Caution: Alcohol is a cause of cancer.
The sprouted seeds are eaten in salads.
Barley water is made by soaking the barley in water and flavouring with lemon.
The young seedlings are dried and powdered and marketed as barleygreen.
Roasted seeds are added to coffee.

DESCRIPTION

An erect annual grass. It grows 80-120 cm tall. The nodes are solid and the internodes are hollow. The leaves are narrow. There are 5-10 leaves. They are produced alternately on opposite sides of the stem at the nodes. The leaves are narrowly sword shaped and 5-40 cm long by 0.5-1.5 cm wide. The flowers are greenish. Flowers have long awns. The fruit is a grain. It is oval and narrow. There are a range of named cultivated varieties.

HABITAT

It is a temperate plant. It requires full sun and well-drained soil. It can tolerate salty conditions. In Nepal it grows to 3500 m altitude. It grows in the mountains in Java. In Ethiopia it grows between 1,800-4,000 m above sea level.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. Seed can be planted 2-6 cm deep. Often 200-250 plants are grown per square metre.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It has a relatively short growing season and matures quickly.

NOTES

There are about 20 Hordeum species. It is gluten free. Barley greens from young leaves are considered very nutritious.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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