PLANT FACT SHEET

Digitaria cruciata (Nees ex Steud.) A. Camus

GENUS *Digitaria* **FAMILY** Poaceae

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Cereal

The husks of the grains are removed and the seed is boiled like rice or ground into flour. It can be used for bread of porridge.

DESCRIPTION

A millet grass. It grows each year from seed. Plants often lie along the ground. Plants form tillers. Plants can root at the nodes. Stems can be 130 cm long. The leaf blade is narrow and 21 cm long by 1 cm wide. It has a rough surface. The flowering shoots consist of 2-10 stalked flowers being produced up the stem. These flower stalks can be 15 cm long. The fruit is dry, one seeded and very small. It the cultivated form the grain does not shatter easily.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows on poor shallow soils with more than 400 mm of rain each year. It grows in the wet tropics of NE India. It is grown by the Khasi people of Assam and the hill tribes of Vietnam. In China it grows in upland grasslands between 1,000-2,700m above sea level.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown from seed. Plants are sown close together.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Plants take 4 months to be ready to harvest. The crop is harvested by tying into sheaves to dry then threshed. The grains are hulled in a mortar then winnowed.

NOTES

There are about 250 Digitaria species.

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