PLANT FACT SHEET

Saccharum spontaneum L.

GENUS *Saccharum* **FAMILY** Poaceae

COMMON NAMES Wild pitpit, Thatch grass, Wild sugarcane

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Shoots, Rhizome, Root, Seeds, Vegetable, Cereal, Stem

The very young flower shoots are eaten raw or cooked. They are also used in chutney.
The peeled rhizome is sweet and is chewed.
Ash from the burnt plant is used as a salt substitute.
The seeds are eaten in Uganda.

DESCRIPTION

A strong clumpy perennial grass. It has rhizomes or underground stems. The stalks are upright, hard and slightly thickened at the nodes. They can be 4 m high. The leaves are long (150 cm) and narrow (4 cm) with fine teeth on the edge. The leaves are flat. The flowers at the tip are like feathers.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows in the lowlands from sea level up to at least 1650 m. It is often common in areas with a strongly seasonal rainfall and in grassland areas. It grows in areas with a rainfall above 1,500 mm. It can grow in arid places.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are mostly grown by dividing up the old clump.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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