PLANT FACT SHEET

Oxytenanthera abyssinica (A. Rich.) Munro

GENUS *Oxytenanthera* **FAMILY** Poaceae

COMMON NAMES Lowland bamboo, Savannah bamboo, Wine bamboo

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, shoots, Cereal, Sap, Manna, Vegetable, Used for wine

The seeds are cooked and used as a rice substitute.
The young shoots are eaten. They can be boiled, steamed, smoked, dried, or salted.
The shoots can be burnt and the ash used as a vegetable salt.
Sap from the stem can be drunk. It is also used to produce a fermented wine.

DESCRIPTION

A bamboo or grass. It grows 10-15 m high. It grows in dense clumps. The stem is solid. It is 8-10 cm wide at the base. It arches slightly at the tips. The sheaths are covered with short dark brown bristly hairs. These can be rubbed off. (They irritate the hands). The leaves are bluish green and narrowly sword shaped. They are 5-25 cm long by 1-3 cm wide. They taper to a spine tipped point. The flowers occur in 1-4 flowered spikes. The upper flowers are of both sexes. The lower flowers are sterile. The grains narrowly taper to both ends.
After flowering the clump dies back to re-shoot from the base.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It grows in dense clumps on dry hillsides in Africa. It will re-grow after fires. It usually grows in high rainfall areas at low altitudes. In Zimbabwe it grows up to 1,160 m above sea level. It grows below 2,100 m above sea level. It is cultivated between 1,500 to 2,400 m above sea level. It can grow in arid places.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It can be grown by division of the roots. It can be cut back and will re-grow.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It grows quickly.

NOTES

Presumably Oxytenathera braunii now Oxytenanthera abyssinica.

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