



PLANT FACT SHEET

Sorghum bicolor (L.) Moench

GENUS *Sorghum* FAMILY Poaceae

COMMON NAMES Sorghum

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Stems, Seeds, Cereal

The seeds are eaten as a cereal.

Flour is prepared then used for porridge or other dishes. It is used for dumplings, fried cakes and drinks. It cannot be used for bread as it contains no gluten.

The stems of some kinds are sweet and are chewed.

It is used for beer, and vinegar.

The grains can be popped and eaten. The sprouted seeds are eaten.

DESCRIPTION

A millet grass. A mature sorghum plant resembles maize. Plants vary in height from 45 cm to 4 m. It is an annual grass with erect solid stems. The stems can be 3 cm across at the base. Under the ground there is a widely branching extensive root system. Prop roots occur near the base. There are a range of different types of sorghum. Some have one main stem while others have many tillers. There are more tillers when plants are widely spaced. The nodes on the stem are slightly thickened. The distance between nodes is shortest near the base of the plant. Short eagerly kinds have 7 leaves while tall late varieties may have 24 leaves. The leaf blade can be 30-135 cm long. Leaves are bluish green and waxy. They have a prominent midrib. The large flower panicle can be 20-40 cm long. The flower occurs at the top of the plant. It can stick upright or bend over. The flower can be open or compact. There are several different varieties. Over 1000 cultivated varieties occur in China.

HABITAT

A tropical plant. It suits the savannah zones in the tropics. It tolerates heat and drought. It can recover from drought even as a seedling. It can tolerate water-logging. It can be grown on heavy or light soils. Sorghum needs short daylengths to flower. Many kinds are adapted to specific daylength and rainfall patterns. It suits hardiness zones 9-12.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Sorghum seeds will germinate soon after harvest. The seeds also store well if kept dry and protected from insects.

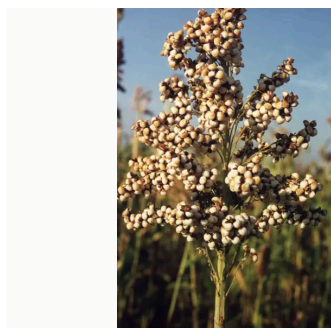
Harvesting and Seed Production

Grain is ready for harvest 4-8 weeks after flowering.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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