PLANT FACT SHEET

Eleocharis sphacelata R. Br.

GENUS *Eleocharis* **FAMILY** Cyperaceae

COMMON NAMES Tall spike rush, Bamboo spike sedge

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: stem - starch, Rhizome, Root

The starch from the underground stems is eaten.
The rhizome can be cooked and eaten.

DESCRIPTION

A sedge. These grow in clumps and have grass like leaves and solid stalks. It is a robust plant which grows in water. It sticks up above the water. It grows to 1.5 m high and spreads to 1 m across. The rhizome roots in the mud. The underground stem or rhizome is 5-6 mm across. The rhizome is thick and woody and produces 2 rows of stems. These stems are 0.5-2 m long by 0.5-1.1 cm wide. They are long narrow stalks which are hollow. The end is blunt. They are leafless. They can produce sterile scales or a flower arrangement. The flower spike is 3-6.5 cm long by 0.4-1.3 cm wide. The fruit is a nut about 0.2 cm long. It is yellow and hard.

HABITAT

It is a tropical to temperate plant. It grows in clumps in fresh water. The water can be flowing or still. It can grow in shallow water or water 2 m deep. It is frost resistant but drought tender. It prefers a sunny position. Tasmanian Herbarium.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plamts are normally grown by dividing the rootstock.

NOTES

Plants can spread rapidly and become a problem. There are about 160 Eleocharis species.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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