



PLANT FACT SHEET

Cymbopogon citratus (Nees) Stapf.

GENUS *Cymbopogon* FAMILY Poaceae

COMMON NAMES Lemon grass

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Herb, Spice, Lower stem, Leaves - tea

It is mostly used as a flavouring in lemon grass tea and stews. The leaves can be dried and stored for use in tea. The very young fleshy white bases of the shoots are used in Asian cooking. The outer layers are peeled off.

DESCRIPTION

A coarse clumpy grass about 1 m high. It forms dense tufts and clumps. The stems are hollow and cane like. The leaves have a rough edge and are about 1 m long by 1 cm wide. They curve over. They are pale blue-green. It very rarely produces flowers. When flowers are produced they are in a loose branched panicle. These are 5 cm long. It has a lemon smell when crushed.

HABITAT

It is a tropical and subtropical plant. It occurs in coastal areas and up to at least 1400 m altitude. It is a good plant for borders and erosion control. They are frost tender. It needs a temperature above 10°C to grow. It needs good drainage. In Argentina it grows from sea level to 2,700 m above sea level. It suits hardiness zones 9-11. In Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

It is grown from portions of the clump. A spacing of about 1 m between clumps is needed. Plants can be easily grown by putting the stem end of a shoot in water until roots form then planting out. It can also be grown by seeds. Being very small they are mixed with ash or sand. They can be sown directly. They can also be put in a nursery and transplanted.

Harvesting and Seed Production

It can be cut 4-8 months after planting and then every 3-4 months. Harvesting can continue to 3-4 years.

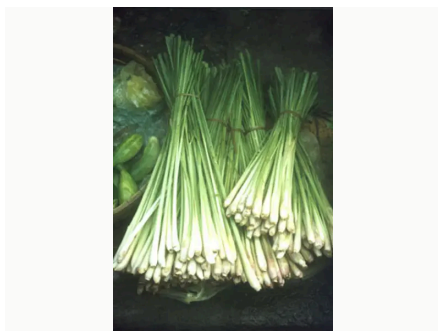
NOTES

Lemon grass oil is used in perfumes and medicines. There are 56 *Cymbopogon* species. It has 2.3 mg per 100 g dry weight and 1.12 mg fresh weight of alpha-tocopherol (Vitamin E).

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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