

# Kew

PLANTS PEOPLE  
POSSIBILITIES



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SEPASAL is a database and enquiry service about useful "wild" and semi-domesticated plants of tropical and subtropical drylands, developed and maintained at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. "Useful" includes plants which humans eat, use as medicine, feed to animals, make things from, use as fuel, and many other uses.

Since 2004, there has been a Namibian SEPASAL team, based at the National Botanical Research Institute of the Ministry of Agriculture which has been updating the information on Namibian species from Namibian and southern African literature and unpublished sources. By August 2007, over 700 Namibian species had been updated.

Work on updating species information, and adding new species to the database, is ongoing. It may be worth visiting the web site and querying the database to obtain the latest information for this species.

*Internet SEPASAL*

New query

Edit query

View query results

 *Display help*In names list include:  synonyms  vernacular names and display: All  names per page*Your query found 29 taxa***Cyperus digitatus Roxb. [5104]**

Family: CYPERACEAE

**Synonyms**

Cyperus auricomus Sieb. ex Spreng. in Syst. Veg. 1

**Vernacular names**

English (Zimbabwe)	sedge [2506]
Kwangali (Namibia)	ofinde [1304]
Kwanyama (Namibia)	eefinde [1304]
Ndebele (Zimbabwe)	inqodi [2506]
Shona (Zimbabwe)	jekejeke [2506], nhokwe [2506]
Unknown (Mozambique)	tchetsa [5480]

**Partial distribution**

Plant origin	Continent	Region	Botanical country
Native	Africa	East Tropical Africa	Kenya [6544], Tanzania [6544], Uganda [6544]
		South Tropical Africa	Mozambique [5480], Zambia [5481], Zimbabwe [5419]
		Southern Africa	Botswana [5104] [5700], Namibia [5104] [5183], Natal [5104], Transvaal [5104]

ISO countries: South Africa [5104]

**Descriptors**

Category	Descriptors and states
DESCRIPTION	Herb [5104] [5123]; Aquatic [5123]; Rhizomatous [6544]; Perennial [5104] [6544]; Plant Height 0.5-2 m [5104] [6544]
CLIMATE	Subtropical, Hot and Arid [5104]
SOILS	Poorly Drained [6544]; Sandy [1304]; Frequently Waterlogged [1304]; Seasonally Waterlogged [6544]
HABITAT	Watercourses [5123]; Lakes/Ponds/Pools [5123]; Vlei/Dambo/Seasonally Flooded

Grassland [5123] [6544]; Altitude 450-2300 m a.s.l. [6544]

## PRODUCTION AND VALUE

Wild Plants Utilised [1304]

## FURTHER DATA SOURCES

Botanical Illustration [6544]; Databases [5123]; Grid Map [5123]

## SEPASAL DATASHEET STATUS

Taxon Recently Added from Literature [6040]

## Uses

Major use	Use group	Specific uses
FOOD ADDITIVES	Entire Plant	tenderisers [2506]
MATERIALS	Fibres	stems, woven material, mats [2506]; stems, woven material, baskets [2506]; unspecified aerial parts, pulp [1340]
MEDICINES	Pregnancy/Birth/Puerperium Disorders	humans, other pregnancy/birth/puerperium disorders/effects, inhalers [1304]

## Picture

None recorded

## Notes

## DISTRIBUTION

### *Mozambique:*

Subsp. auricomus occurs in the Gaza and Zambezia provinces [5480] .

### *Namibia:*

Grootfontein district [5183] .

### *Southern Africa:*

Subsp. auricomus [5104] .

## DESCRIPTION

### *Height:*

0.6-2 m [5104] .

### *Inflorescence:*

40-200 mm long and 30-150 mm wide, anthela consisting of one sessile and stalked groups of spikes [6544] .

### *Leaves:*

Basal leaves few, the largest 0.2-0.5 m long and 6-12 mm wide, flat, scabrid at least on margins and midrib. Leaf sheaths brown to purple [6544] .

### *Lifeform:*

Cyperoid, helophyte [5104] .

### *Roots:*

8-12 mm thick, woody, creeping, scale covered rhizome. The scales are reddish brown breaking up into blackish fibres [6544] .

### *Stems:*

Culms 0.5-1.6 m long and 2-10 mm thick, sharply triangular to almost winged, scabrid to almost smooth [6544] .

## IDENTIFICATION

This species is recognized by its cylindrical spikes with rather angular and not compressed spikelets. The golden to reddish brown colour is also characteristic [6544] .

## FOOD ADDITIVES - ENTIRE PLANT

### *Tenderisers:*

In Zimbabwe the plant is a common source of potash for softening and flavouring green leaves [2506] .

## MATERIALS - FIBRES

### *Woven material, mats, baskets, stems:*

The stems are used for weaving mats and baskets in Zimbabwe [2506] .

## MEDICINES - PREGNANCY/BIRTH/PUERPERIUM DISORDERS

### *Humans, other pregnancy/birth/puerperium disorders, inhalers:*

After a child is born the plant is roasted in a clay bowl. The smoke drifts over the mother and inhalation assists recovery [1304] .

## ALTITUDE

### *East Africa:*

1140-1800 m [6544] .

### *Kenya:*

450-2300 m [6544] .

### *Southern Africa:*

610-1130 m [5104] .

## TOPOGRAPHY/SITES

### *East Africa:*

In swamps or near water, often in seasonally wet habitats [6544] .

### *Namibia:*

Riverbanks, marshes, pools and vleis, growing in water [5123] .

## CYTOLOGY

For the genus  $x = 5, 8 (6, 7, 9, 13)$  (high aneuploids, high polyploidy) [5150] .

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND DATASHEET PROGRESS

Updated for southern Africa by E. Irish, checked by C. Mannheimer; SEPASAL Namibia, National Botanical Research Institute, February 2007 .

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