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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which has been updating the information on Namibian species from Namibian and southern African literature and unpublished sources.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 1 taxon***Vetiveria nigritana (Benth.) Stapf [2182]**

Family: POACEAE

**Synonyms**

Mandelorna insignis Steudel

Vetiveria zizanoides (L.) Nash var. nigritana (Benth.) A. Camus

Andropogon nigritanus Benth.

Andropogon squarrosus L.f. var. nigritanus (Benth.) Hackel

**Vernacular names**

(Mozambique)	gencha [5480]
English (Namibia)	vetiver [5083] [5115]
German (Namibia)	Dachgras [5083] [5115]
Jul'hoan (Namibia)	lla-doa [5083] [5115]
Kwanyama (Namibia)	enenge [5083]
Oshiwambo (Namibia)	omanenge [5083] [5115]
Rukwangali (Namibia)	marenge [5083] [5115]
Silozi (Namibia)	sivamba [5083] [5115]
Thimbukushu (Namibia)	rungutji [5083] [5115]

**Partial distribution**

Plant origin	Continent	Region	Botanical country
Native	Africa	East Tropical Africa	Tanzania
		South Tropical Africa	Angola [5126], Malawi [3] [5608], Mozambique [3] [5480], Zambia [3] [5481], Zimbabwe [3] [5608]
		Southern Africa	Botswana [3] [5104] [5150] [5186], Caprivi Strip [3] [2182] [5115], Namibia [2182] [5104] [5115] [5150] [5183]
Status Unknown	Asia-Tropical	Indian Subcontinent	Sri Lanka
		Indo-China	Thailand
		Malesia	Philippines
Status Unknown	Africa	West Tropical Africa	Benin, Burkina, Ghana,

Guinea, Guinea-Bissau,  
Ivory Coast, Mali,  
Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria  
[5608], Senegal, Sierre  
Leone, The Gambia, Togo

**ISO countries:** Malaysia

## Descriptors

Category	Descriptors and states
DESCRIPTION	Herb; Tussock Forming/Tufted/Caespitose [3] [2182]; Erect [5123]; Terrestrial [3] [5123]; Rhizomatous [5123]; Perennial [2182] [5115]; Unarmed - unspecified parts; Aromatic - stems [1304]; Plant Height 1.5-3 m [2182] [5104]
CLIMATE	Tropical Summer Rains [3] [2182]; Annual Rainfall >= 500 mm [5106] [5115]
SOILS	Sometimes Waterlogged (frequency unknown) [2182]; Poorly Drained [2182]; Seasonally Waterlogged [2255]
HABITAT	Forest [3]; Wooded Grassland [2182]; Watercourses [3] [5123]; Anthropogenic Landscapes [3]; Floodplains [5123]; Altitude 0-1300 m a.s.l. [3] [2255]
SOURCES OF PLANTING MATERIAL	RBG Kew Seed Bank; Other Seed Sources [5181]
CONSERVATION	IUCN Status - Lower Risk, Least Concern (LC) [5400]
FURTHER DATA SOURCES	Botanical Illustration [3] [2182]; Additional References [5349]; Botanical Photograph [2182]; Databases [5123] [5341]; Grid Map [2182] [5115]
SEPASAL DATASHEET STATUS	Nomenclature Checked

## Uses

Major use	Use group	Specific uses
MATERIALS	Fibres	stems, basketry (from fibre), baskets; stems, necklaces [1140] [1304]; unspecified aerial parts, thatch [5118]; stems, toys/games [1304]; stems, hats [1304]
MEDICINES	Other Materials/Chemicals	stems, beads
	Digestive System Disorders	roots, humans, intestine, constipation, enemas [1304]
ENVIRONMENTAL USES	Infections/Infestations	roots, humans, genitourinary system, gonorrhoea, enemas [1304]
	Boundaries/Barriers/Supports	animal barriers, homesteads [5118]; boundary markers, live fences [5608]; other types of boundaries/barriers/supports, live fences, croplands/orchards [5608]
	Firebreaks	live plant in situ [5608]

## Picture

None recorded

## Notes

## NOMENCLATURE/TAXONOMY

Name has changed to *Chrysopogon nigritanus* (Benth.) See Flora of Zambesiaca Vol 10 (4) p. 36 (2002) [3] .

## DISTRIBUTION

### *Namibia:*

Infrequent to common [5115] [5123] .

### *Namibia:*

Occurs only in the far north [5115] .

### *Southern Africa:*

Infrequent [2182] .

### *Worldwide:*

Tropical Africa, sporadic east to the Phillipines [2182] .

### *Namibia:*

Occurs in the Kaokoland, Owambo and Okavango districts [5183] .

## DESCRIPTION

### *Height:*

1.2-2.4 m [2255] .

### *Inflorescences:*

Spikelets (sessile) 5.5 - 7.0 mm long (pedicellate slightly shorter). Glumes dark purple, short-spiny, tips rounded [2182] .

### *Leaves:*

Leaf blades to 90 mm long and up to 7 mm wide (margins cutting) [2182] .

### *Lifeform:*

Graminoid [5104] .

## MATERIALS - FIBRES

### *Necklaces, stems:*

The aromatic stems, especially below the inflorescence, are cut into short sections and hollow stems are strung as beads to be worn around the neck by the Kwanyama Ovambos in Namibia (Loeb 1956). It is also used for hoops, hats and toys [1304] .

## MEDICINES - DIGESTIVE SYSTEM DISORDERS

### *Roots, humans, intestine, constipation, enemas:*

Powdered roots are boiled in water, cooled and used as an enema by the Kwanyama Ovambos in Namibia (Loeb 1956) but they do not make clear the purpose other than "alimentary disorders". Presumed to be for constipation [1304] .

## MEDICINES - INFECTIONS/INFESTATIONS

### *Roots, humans, genitourinary system, gonorrhoea, enemas:*

Powdered roots are boiled in water, cooled, and used as an enema for treatment of gonorrhoea by the Kwanyama Ovambos in Namibia (Loeb 1956) [1304] .

## ENVIRONMENTAL USES - BOUNDARIES/BARRIERS/SUPPORTS

### *Boundary markers, live fences:*

It has been used to mark out boundaries of properties in northern Nigeria, Malawi and Zambia [5608] .

### *Homesteads, animal barriers:*

Used by the Kwanyama Ovambos in Namibia as kraal fences [5118] .

### *Other types of barriers, live fences, croplands:*

Tobacco farmers in Zimbabwe report that putting a vetiver hedge around their fields keeps out creeping-grass weeds, such as kikuyu and couch [5608] .

## ENVIRONMENTAL USES - FIREBREAKS

*Live plant in situ:*

It is a good barrier to ground fires if planted as a hedge around croplands [5608] .

## **ALTITUDE**

0-1100 m [2255] .

*Southern Africa:*

300 - 1,000 m [5104] .

## **DRAINAGE**

*Southern Africa:*

Occurs in wet places [2182] .

## **SOILS**

*Southern Africa:*

Often on black turf soil [2182] .

## **VEGETATION**

*Namibia:*

With Acacia and Combretum [5123] .

*Southern Africa:*

Savanna [2182] .

## **ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS - MISCELLANEOUS**

*Southern Africa:*

Occurs in wet places [2182] .

## **FLOWERING/FRUITING/SEED SET**

*Flowering, southern Africa:*

July to June [2182] .

## **CYTOLOGY**

For the genus  $x = 5, 10$  (polyploidy) [5150] .

## **SEED/GENE BANK SOURCES**

National Plant Genetic Resources Centre, National Botanical Research Institute, Private Bag 13184, Windhoek, Namibia .

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND DATASHEET PROGRESS**

Updated for southern Africa by E. Irish; checked by A. Jarvis; Sepasal Namibia, National Botanical Research Institute, September 2005 .

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