

Cymbopogon citratus

Common name: Lemon grass, Citronella grass or fever grass

Family: Poaceae

Habit: Herb

Location: Science Block and Botanical garden

Distribution: *Cymbopogon citratus* is native to Island Southeast Asia (Malesia). It has been introduced extensively to South Asia since precolonial times. After World War I, lemongrass was introduced to Madagascar, South America, and Central America. It has now been naturalized throughout the tropics and subtropics worldwide

Description: Its growth form is clump-forming grass up to 1.2 m tall or 2m tall when in flower. Leaf blades are light green and strap-shaped (up to 0.9 m long, 2.5 cm wide). Like other grasses, the leaves also have parallel venation. Crushed leaves exude a lemony scent. A pseudostem formed from tightly-overlapping leaf sheaths on non-flowering shoots is 12-25 cm long and 1-2 cm across, bulbous and thickening towards base of plant. It is fragrant when crushed and yellowish-brown or reddish.

Uses: The leaves and the oil are used to make medicine. Lemongrass is used for treating digestive tract spasms, stomachache, high blood pressure, convulsions, pain, vomiting, cough, achy joints (rheumatism), fever, the common cold, and exhaustion. It is also used to kill germs and as a mild astringent. Some people apply lemongrass and its essential oil directly to the skin for headache, stomachache, abdominal pain, and muscle pain.

