

Indigenous

Bl: *Sesl*
Tr: *Shelshel*

Eng: *Reed grass*

Tg: *Shambuko*

- Ecology:** Grows in dense clumps by water courses, up to 2,400 m. In Eritrea, it grows in the river banks and irrigation canals, and also as an ornamental in home gardens in the highlands and mid-lands, e.g. at Elabered, Ghinda, Asmara and Adi-keih.
- Uses:** **Furniture** (local), fodder, **fences, spinning tools, grain stores, thatching, basketry, river-bank stabilization**, flute making, support for horticultural crops, shade for tree seedlings.
- Description:** A leafy **perennial grass 2-6 m high**, usually in dense clumps. Stems or culms grow up from a thick, knotty underground stem or rhizome. Stems are hollow and some may branch. **LEAVES:** As in many grasses, the leaf base or sheath surrounds the stem. Leaf blades are **spaced regularly** around stem, **each one 30-50 cm x 5-7 cm wide** with a **long pointed tip**. **FLOWERS:** This grass does not normally flower in Eritrea. Upright flowering heads reach up to 60 cm and produce typical grass seed elsewhere.
- Propagation:** Rhizomes.
- Seed:**
treatment:
storage:
- Management:** It multiplies on favourable sites. Cut back the rhizomes to control growth.
- Remarks:** The grass is widely cultivated in Eritrea, especially for fencing and for supporting climbing horticultural crops. The stem is used to make the local spinning tool, *mefel*. Dry stems are used to build grain stores.

