

Olyra latifolia

Poaceae



Indigenous

Agn: *Opero*

Am: *Kesem*

Mjr: *Boli*

Nur: *Duper*

Ecology

Grows in Moist Bereha and Moist to Wet Kolla agroclimatic zones of Gambella, Illubabor, Kefa, Wolega and North Shoa, 400—1,400 m, annual rainfall 900—1,500 mm.

Uses

Utensils (drinking straw, tools for spinning).

Description

Tall, reed-like perennial woody grass growing from knobby rhizome to a height of 3 m. **STEM:** hollow inside except at the nodal sections; often no more than 1.2 cm in diameter, cane-like culms rising to 3m or more; erect or scandent, often purple blotched below, the lower nodes with papery bladeless sheaths, the upper nodes branching. **LEAVES:** leaf-blades ovate-oblong, mostly 11–18 cm in length and 2–5 cm in width, abruptly acuminate, leaf-blade base asymmetrically rounded to a short false petiole. **FLOWER:** inflorescence, a rather compact panicle 6–20 cm long, the lower branches predominantly male, with a number of male spikelets below a large terminal female spikelets. Male spikelets borne on filiform, often convolute pedicels; lemma membranous, 3-nerved, 4.5 mm long, drawn out into an awn of equal

length. Female spikelets on stout clavate pedicels; glumes membranous, tardily deciduous; lower glume lanceolate, 8–9 mm long, 7–9-nerved, caudate-aristate with an awn up to 15 mm long; upper glume similar but only shortly caudate; lemma 4–6 mm long, palea equaling the lemma, the whole floret becoming plump, indurated and shiny white or pale brown at maturity

Propagation

Vegetative from offset culms and rhizomes. It can also be propagated from seedlings and wildings.

Seed

Treatment: There is no need for special treatment.

Storage: Can be stored in airtight containers in cool dry place.

Remark

Has been common in northern Ethiopia such as Gemza plain in northern Shoa, but it is now extinct in those areas. It has been in use for centuries in traditional spinning of cotton threads used in weaving clothes.

