

Cymbopogon

Cymbopogon, also known as lemongrass, barbed wire grass, silky heads, oily heads, Cochin grass, Malabar grass, citronella grass or fever grass, is a genus of Asian, African, Australian, and tropical island plants in the grass family.[5][6][7][8][9]

Some species (particularly *Cymbopogon citratus*) are commonly cultivated as culinary and medicinal herbs because of their scent, resembling that of lemons (*Citrus limon*).

The name cymbopogon derives from the Greek words kymbe (κύμβη, 'boat') and pogon (πόγων, 'beard') "which mean [that] in most species, the hairy spikelets project from boat-shaped spathes." [10] Lemongrass and its oil are believed to possess therapeutic properties.[9][11][12]

Citronella grass (*Cymbopogon nardus* and *Cymbopogon winterianus*) grow to about 2 metres (6+1/2 feet) and have magenta-colored base stems. These species are used for the production of citronella oil, which is used in soaps, as an insect repellent (especially mosquitoes and houseflies) in insect sprays and candles, and aromatherapy. The principal chemical constituents of citronella, geraniol and citronellol, are antiseptics, hence their use in household disinfectants and soaps. Besides oil production, citronella grass is also used for culinary purposes as a flavoring.

East Indian lemongrass (*Cymbopogon flexuosus*), also called Cochin grass or Malabar grass, is native to Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, India, Sri Lanka, Burma, and Thailand, while West Indian lemongrass (*Cymbopogon citratus*) is native to maritime Southeast Asia. While both can be used interchangeably, *C. citratus* is more suitable for cooking.

In India, *C. citratus* is used as a medical herb and in perfumes. *C. citratus* is consumed as a tea for anxiety in Brazilian folk medicine,[13] but a study in humans found no effect.[14] The tea caused a recurrence of contact dermatitis in one case.[15] In the Caribbean, the tea is also brewed and consumed to boost immunity. It is called Tanglad in the Philippines, where it is believed that it has health benefits for the liver and the kidneys.

One study found the tea may exert an erythropoiesis boosting effect.[16]

In Hoodoo, lemongrass is the primary ingredient of van van oil, one of the most popular oils used in conjure.[17] Lemongrass is used in this preparation and on its own in hoodoo to protect against evil, spiritually clean a house, and to bring good luck in love affairs.[18]

In beekeeping, lemongrass oil imitates the pheromone emitted by a honeybee's Nasonov gland to attract bees to a hive or a swarm.

Species included in the genus include:[3]

Numerous species are now regarded as better suited to other genera, including *Andropogon*, *Exothea*, *Hyparrhenia*, *Iseilema*, *Schizachyrium*, and *Themeda*.

Lemongrass at a market

Prepared lemongrass

Lemongrass (*Cymbopogon flexuosus*) essential oil in clear glass vial

Thai yam takhrai kung sot (■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■), a salad (yam) made with prawns and finely sliced fresh lemongrass

A knot of lemongrass used to impart fragrance in dinuguan (Filipino pork blood stew)

Knots of lemongrass ready for use in Filipino cuisine

