

Botanic name: *Digitaria ciliaris* (Retz.) Pers. -- Syn. Pl. [Persoon] 1: 85. 1805 (IK)

Common name: Crabgrass, tropical finger grass, bamboo grass; blanket crabgrass; hairy crabgrass

Family: Poaceae (Gramineae)

Habitat: Terrestrial

Distribution: Asian origin' now distributed throughout the tropics and sub-tropics including India. Due to extensive spreading capability, the plant is aggressively invasive in many countries and islands such as Chagos archipelago, Cuba, Mexico, Mauritius, Virgin islands (USA), and in Oceania as a widespread weed of annual and perennial crops, including pastures, roadsides and wasteland. The allelochemicals found in root exudates and rhizosphere inhibits crop growth and alters as negative feedback in crop-microbial flora during chemical fertilizer regimes, badly affecting crop growth and productivity. More read: *J. Agric. Food Chem.*, **2013**, 61 (22), 5310–5317

Description: An annual decumbent grassrooting at the nodes and spreading to form untidy patches up to 1 m across and 50 cm high; leaves reach up to 25 cm length and 1 cm in width; sheaths and lower parts of leaves loosely hairy on both surfaces; ligule membranous, inflorescence spikelet (racemose), 1-3 mm long Inflorescence on a long culm, usually much taller than the foliage, consisting of 2-9 racemes 5-10(-15) cm long, sub-digitate with one or more inserted up to 1 cm below the others; spikelets, arranged in pairs, one sessile and the other shortly pedicelled, tapering to an acute tip. The lower glume is a very short but distinct scale about 0.3 mm long; the upper glume at least half, usually about 3/4 the length of the spikelet, with three nerves. The upper lemma is as long as the spikelet and has 5-7 nerves, usually with a distinct space each side of the central one. The lateral nerves are smooth, variable in hairiness, sometimes with very long hairs. The upper lemma is smooth with only one nerve, grey to light brown. Grain caryopsis, 1.5-2 mm long.

Phytochemicals: veratric acid, maltol, and (-)-loliolide, total condensed tannin, high protein (seed)

Medicinal/ Economic use: Leaves might be cyanogenic. Seeds may be ground up and used as flour. The fine white flour can be used for semolina. Decoction of plant used in treatment of gonorrhoea. Used as folk remedy for cataracts and debility. Also, said to be emetic. Provides useful assistance in protecting soil against erosion and material for mulch or compost.