

# Living Herbs

## Description

**Lemon Grass for cooking**  
**Cymbopogon citratus**  
**Family: Poaceae**

Lemon Grass is a perennial grass that can reach up to 90cm high with a brownish-green leaf that grows from a bulbous base, or in a sheath from the stem. The leaf is narrow, bent, sharp-edged and tough growing up to 1m long, with a strong lemon scent when crushed. Flowers rarely form and consist of pods of green pistils similar to those of Ryegrass but branched in right angles many times along the lengths of the stem, with pink-beige stamens loosely dangling from each flower.

## Growing Tips

It likes heat, plenty of sun or semi-shade and can sustain drought but grows better when soil is kept moist. It dislikes the wet and cold and is frost tender. Bulbous growth around the original bulb allows the plant to expand. For best results plant 15cm apart.

## Parts Used

Leaves

## Uses

The fresh leaves and stem of the Lemon Grass, when chopped and crushed adds a lemon flavour to curries, fish, chicken. In Africa and Mexico it is used as a tea. It is also widely used in Philippine cooking where it is called Tanglad.

The essential oil extracted from Lemon Grass has antifungal properties so can be used to treat Athlete's foot and as a preservative and natural pesticide.

It is also used for cosmetics and soap powders.

It is traditionally used in Brazil to relieve anxiety.

## Origin & History

It is native to India and tropical Asia and was introduced to New Zealand by Dutch settlers who brought it with them after World War II after they had encountered it in their colony



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