



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

*Cymbopogon citratus*¹

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Introduction

This herbaceous perennial originated in India and adapts to Florida conditions quite well (Fig. 1). Foliage emerges from a clump typical of the grasses. Leaves remain green most of the year turning dark red to scarlet in fall and winter. Unlike many of the grasses, the flower display is insignificant.

General Information

Scientific name: *Cymbopogon citratus*

Pronunciation: sim-baw-POE-gawn sit-TRAY-tiss

Common name(s): Lemongrass

Family: *Gramineae*

Plant type: herbaceous; ornamental grass

USDA hardiness zones: 10 through 11 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: accent; border; mass planting

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

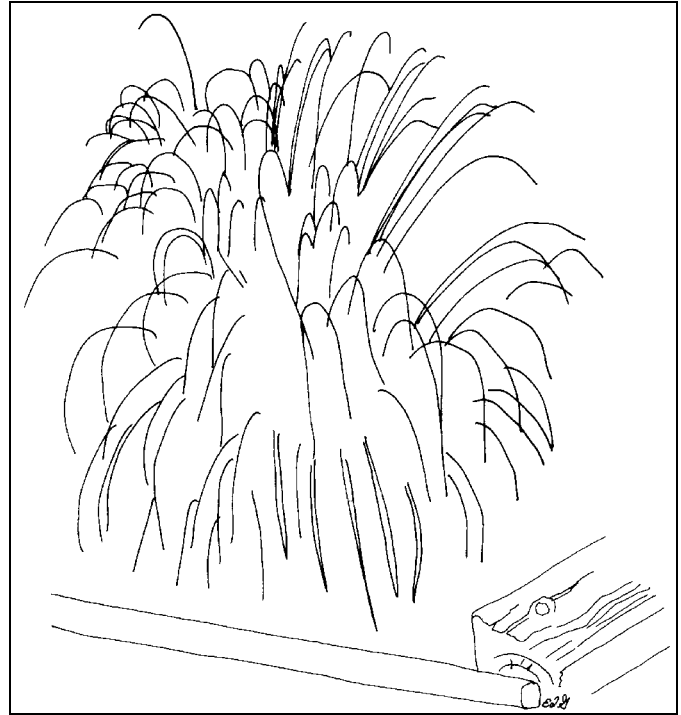


Figure 1. Lemongrass.

Description

Height: 4 to 6 feet

Spread: 4 to 6 feet

Plant habit: round

Plant density: dense

Growth rate: fast

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: most emerge from the soil, usually without a stem

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: linear

Leaf venation: parallel

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf type and persistence: fragrant

Leaf blade length: 18 to 36 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: red

Fall characteristic: showy

Flower

Flower color: no flowers

Flower characteristic: no flowers

Fruit

Fruit shape: no fruit

Fruit length: no fruit

Fruit cover: no fruit

Fruit color: no fruit

Fruit characteristic: no fruit

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: typically multi-trunked or clumping stems

Current year stem/twig color: not applicable

Current year stem/twig thickness: not applicable

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun

Soil tolerances: acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam; clay;

Drought tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerances: unknown

Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: aggressive, spreading plant

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

This and many other grasses look nice grouped together in a mass planting. Space them several feet apart to form a solid mass within one year after planting. The grass can spread fairly rapidly and can become somewhat invasive in subtropical climates.

Plants are often located in a scented garden or perennial border. The nice texture and scented leaves makes it a good plant for court yards, patios and other places where people can enjoy it. Scented oils are extracted from the leaves. Lemongrass may become mildly invasive in the yard with its aggressive, spreading habit.

Pests and Diseases

No major problems prevent use of Lemongrass with the possible exception of the somewhat invasive habit.