

Eleusine indica

Recognize the problem

Family: Poaceae (grass family)

Common names: goose grass, wild finger millet

Chichewa: Chinsangwi; **Yao:** Chigombe; **Luganda:** Kasibanti.

Tufted annual grass, stems trailing on the ground or erect. Up to 40 cm high. Flowering stems with alternate leaves, most located toward the base of the stems; its particularly tough root system makes it hard to pull out.

Leaves: Fresh green in colour, without hairs; up to 8 mm wide and 15 cm long; flat or folded along central vein (cross-section is V-shaped); leaf tip boat-shaped.

Inflorescence: Branched; each flowering stem produces 3-8 flower heads ('branches') that usually are attached at the tip of the flowering stem, although one or more may be attached lower; flower heads 5-10 cm long, 5 mm wide, with two dense rows of flowers.

Background

Origin: The geographical origin is uncertain, but it is considered native to Africa and temperate and tropical Asia.

Introduced: Unclear.

Habitat: Most typical of the tropics and sub-tropics, but with a worldwide distribution; present on a wide range of soil types, but prefers highly fertile soils; thrives well in full sunlight, wet conditions and compacted soil.

Spread: Seeds are dispersed by wind and water, as a contaminant in crop seeds and soils, and attached to animal fur and machinery.

Invades: Annual and perennial crops, pasture, disturbed natural habitats, margins of natural forests and grasslands, marshes, stream banks and coastal areas, grows alongside roads, pavements, and powerline corridors.

Impact: *Eleusine indica* may occur in virtually any annual crop in the tropics and sub-tropics and also in many perennial crops and pastures. Crop losses due to the weed have rarely been quantified, but it is frequently among the dominant weed species and can lead to serious crop losses (20-70%, depending on crop system). It is perhaps most conspicuous in annual row-crops such as cereals, legumes, cotton, tobacco and vegetable crops in which it is able to establish rapidly before there is adequate shading from the crop. The weed may cause livestock poisoning and may act as an alternative host for crop pests and diseases.

Growth habit of goose grass.
(Photo by Chris Parker/Bristol, UK)



Inflorescence of goose grass.
(Photo by Wikimedia Commons)



Scientific name(s) > *Eleusine indica*

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: All Countries



Authors: CABI. Edited by participants from Malawi and Uganda at a workshop in Nairobi, February 2016.

CABI

tel: +254 (0)20 2271000 email: africa@cabi.org

Edited by Plantwise.