

Cyperus exaltatus

Family: Cyperaceae

Species: *Cyperus exaltatus* Retz.

Common Names: None provided

Synonyms: *Cyperus racemosus* Heyne

Bayer Code: CYPEX

Description: A very robust perennial (Haines and Lye, 1983) with crowded culms up to 1 cm thick and 1.5 m high arising from a short, thick, woody rhizome. The leaves are all basal, up to 80 cm long by about 1 cm wide. The inflorescence is up to 30 cm x 40 cm, subtended by leafy bracts up to 60 cm long and 1 cm wide. The individual spikelets are 6–12 mm long by 1.5 mm wide, 12–20-flowered, the glumes about 2 mm long, ovate-elliptic, reddish brown to golden with 2–3 nerves on each side of an excurrent green midrib. The spikelets are arranged in spikes, about 4 cm long x 2 cm wide consisting of 15–60 spikelets. Some of these are sessile, but most are in clusters on inflorescence branches 5–20 cm long. There are three stamens and three style branches, and the nutlet is trigonous, about 1 mm long x 0.5 mm wide, grayish and smooth.

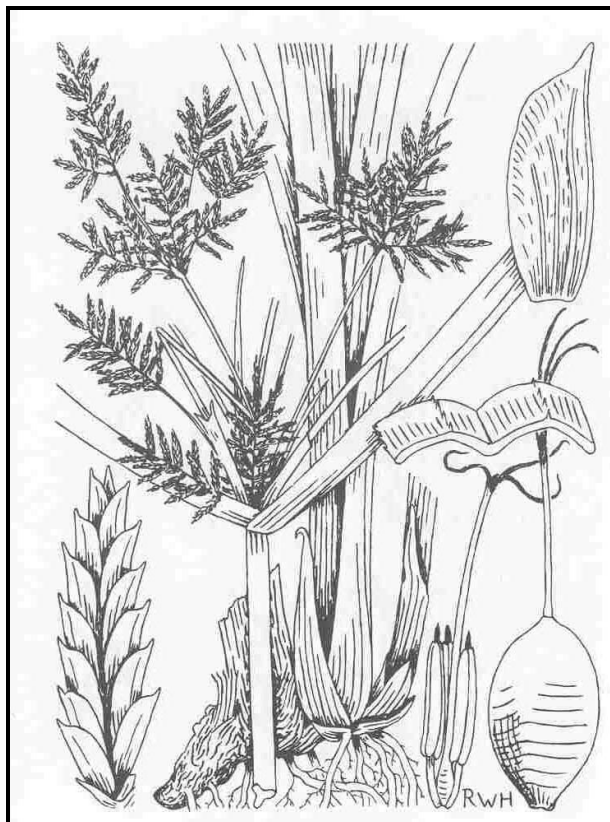


Figure 1. *Cyperus exaltatus* from Haines and Lye (1983)



Figure 2. *Cyperus exaltatus* from Auld and Medd (1992)*

*Auld, B.A. and Medd, R.W. 1992. Weeds: an Illustrated Botanical Guide to the Weeds of Australia. Inkata Press. 255 pp. (Copyright: New South Wales Agriculture)

Distribution: *Cyperus exaltatus* is a pantropical species occurring on all the major continents. It is native in Asia (India, Nepal), Africa (Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, and Uganda), the Americas (South America), and Australasia (Australia) (Haines and Lye, 1983; Holm et al., 1979; Hooper and Napper, 1972; Lazarides et al., 1997; Siwakoti and Varma, 1995).

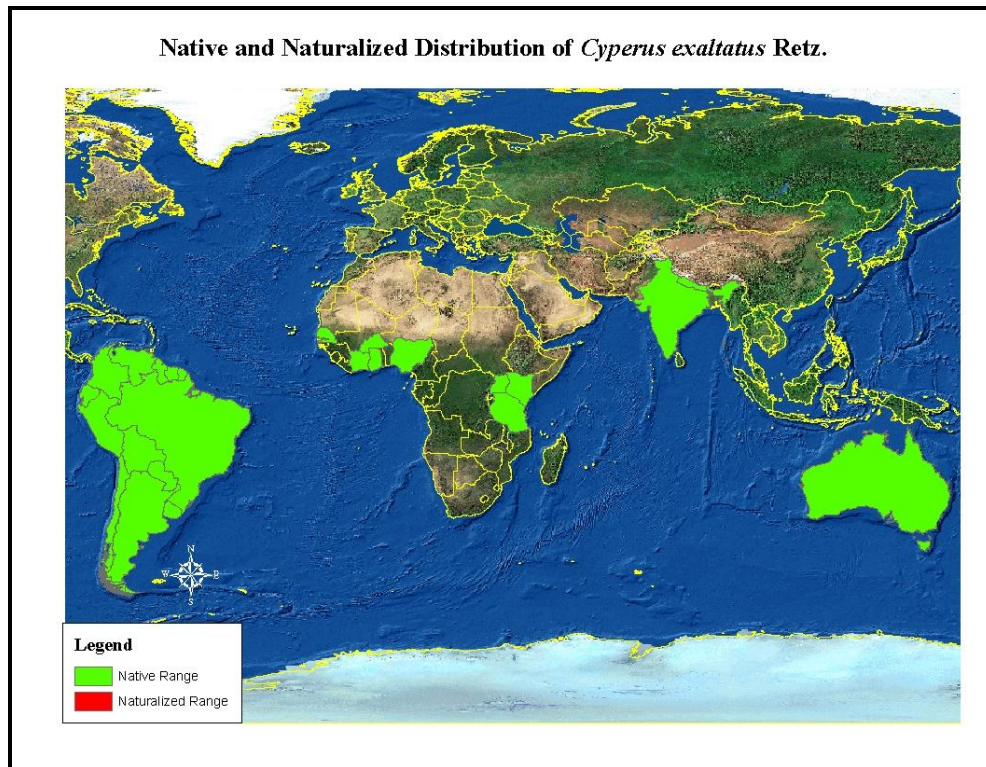


Figure 3. By Glenn Fowler, USDA APHIS PPQ CPHST, 2002 (Fowler, 2002)

Biology and Ecology: *Cyperus exaltatus* is a plant of swamps, irrigation channels, and open water. Due to the production of large numbers of very small seeds, the chance of establishment and spread along water courses appears high. *Cyperus exaltatus* has been listed as a “principal” weed in India by Holm et al. (1979) and is included as a weed of Australia by Lazarides et al. (1997). Its worldwide, pantropical distribution suggests a wide latitude in adaptation.

Possible Pathways to the United States: Accidental entry is not especially likely, but *Cyperus exaltatus* is grown as an ornamental and is available on the internet from sites in France and Australia. This makes its introduction highly possible. Lazarides (1997) refer to its use as a fodder, suggesting some risk of deliberate introduction also for this purpose.

Adverse Impact: Its robust growth could lead to serious competitive effects on native vegetation in swamps, irrigation channels, and open water.

Literature Cited:

- Auld, B. A., and R. W. Medd. 1992. Weeds: An illustrated botanical guide to the weeds of Australia. Inkata Press, Melbourne, Australia. 255 pp.
- Fowler, G. 2002. Distribution Map. USDA, APHIS, PPQ, Center for Plant Health Science and Technology, Raleigh, NC.
- Haines, R. W., and K. A. Lye. 1983. The Sedges and Rushes of East Africa: A flora of the families Juncaceae and Cyperaceae in East Africa ; with a particular reference to Uganda. East African Natural History Society, Nairobi. 404 pp.
- Holm, L. G., J. V. Pancho, J. P. Herberger, and D. L. Plucknett. 1979. A Geographical Atlas of World Weeds. Wiley, New York. 391 pp.
- Hooper, S. S., and D. M. Napper. 1972. Cyperaceae. Pages 278-349 in J. Hutchinson, J. M. Dalziel, and F. N. Hepper, (eds.). Flora of West Tropical Africa. Vol. 3, Pt. 2. Crown Agents for Overseas Governments, London.
- Lazarides, M., K. J. Cowley, and P. Hohnen. 1997. CSIRO handbook of Australian weeds. CSIRO Australia, Collingwood, Vic. 264 pp.
- Siwakota, M., and S. K. Varma. 1995. Additions to the flora of Nepal - II. Journal of Economic and Taxonomic Botany 19(3):647-652.