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Cortaderia selloana

[Synonyms : *Arundo dioeca*, *Arundo dioica*, *Arundo kila*, *Arundo selloana*, *Cortaderia argentea*, *Cortaderia dioica*, *Cortaderia quila*, *Cortaderia rudiusscula*, *Gynerium argenteum*, *Gynerium dioicum*, *Gynerium purpureum*, *Moorea argentea*]

PAMPAS-GRASS is an evergreen grass. Native to Argentina, Brazil and Chile, it has silvery white or silvery pink plumes.

It is also known as *Capim dos Pampas* (Portuguese), *Erva dos Pampas* (Portuguese), *Graminée des Pampas* (French), *Kortaderie dvoudomá* (Czech), *Pampaheinä* (Finnish), *Pampas dvoudomý* (Czech), *Pampasgræs* (Danish), *Pampasgras* (German, Swedish), *Pampasgräs* (Swedish), *Plumas* (Portuguese), *Selloa pampas grass*, *Silver pampas grass*, *Uruguayan pampas grass*, and *White pampas grass*.

Warning – gloves ought to be worn when handling the plant because of the razor-sharp leaves. *Selloana* commemorates a German botanist and naturalist, Friedrich Sellow or Sello (1789-1831). He started as a gardener then developed his knowledge by working and studying in the Botanical Gardens in Berlin and Paris (*Jardin des Plantes*), as well as travelling in Europe attending lectures and meeting leading botanists. In 1814 he joined an expedition to Brazil which was funded by British botanists. There, recognised for the first time as an official naturalist he made many excursions in Brazil (notably the south) and Uruguay (either alone or as a member of other expeditions) not only of increasing length but also to areas previously unexplored by Europeans. Sellow is said to have collected thousands of botanical, entomological and mineralogical specimens that he sent to botanical gardens in Brazil, England, Germany and Portugal. After his death (he drowned in a river) most of his diaries, drawings and other material eventually found their way to two museums in Berlin, the Museum of Natural History (also known as the Humboldt Museum) and the Ethnological Museum).

Pampas-grass has been cultivated locally for its leaf fibre used for making paper.

A Scottish botanist, James Tweedie (1775-1862), is said to have introduced pampas-grass to Britain. After spending time in the Edinburgh Botanic Garden, he emigrated to South America and sent seeds of this species and many others back to his home Country.

It is much admired both as an ornamental garden plant and in flower arrangements for which the plumes are usually picked and dried immediately they appear.