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Cymbopogon densiflorus

[Synonyms : *Andropogon densiflorus*, *Andropogon schoenanthus*, *Andropogon schoenanthus* subsp. *densiflorus*, *Andropogon stypticus*, *Cymbopogon schoenanthus*, *Cymbopogon schoenanthus* var. *densiflorus*, *Cymbopogon schoenanthus* var. *typicus*, *Cymbopogon stypticus*]

DESERT CAMEL GRASS is a grass. It is native to northern Africa and northern India. It is also known as *Bhutika* (Sanskrit), Camel grass, *Gandhabena* (Bengali), *Khavi* (Indian), *Rousaghas* (Hindi), *Shakanaru-pillu* (Malayalam), and Spikenard.

The leaves and roots yield 'camel grass oil'.

Densiflorus is made up of Latin *densi-* (dense) and *-flora* (flowered) components.

The name Spikenard was applied to several plants, this one included. It is this species that many authorities believe is meant by the reference to 'spikenard' in the Song of Solomon in the *Bible*.

The oil distilled from the grass roots was used by the ancient Egyptians (remains have been found in some of the Egyptian tombs), the ancient Greeks and the Romans during religious ceremonies.

The essential oil is still sold today in some of the Indian bazaars in the Punjab and has been used to treat rheumatism and neuralgia, and it has been used as an ingredient in perfumes and insect repellents.