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Panicum miliaceum

[Synonyms : *Leptoloma miliacea*, *Milium esculentum*, *Milium paniceum*, *Panicum asperrimum*, *Panicum densepilosum*, *Panicum milium*]

COMMON MILLET (English, French) is a cultivated annual grass. Probably originating in north-eastern Asia it has with spikelets of tiny green (occasionally purple) flowers.

It is also known as *Bajra* (Urdu), Bread millet, Broomcorn millet, Broom millet, Brown corn, Canary grass, *Chena* (Hindi), *Chin* (Hindi), *Chiná* (Bengali, Sanskrit), *Chinwa* (Kashmiri), Common hog, Common proso, *Dokhan* (Hebrew), *Dokhn* (Arabic), *Echte Hirse* (German), *Goldhirse* (German), *Hirs* (Swedish), *Hirssi* (Finnish), Hog millet, Indian millet, *Katakuny* (Tamil), *Kê* (Vietnamese), *Kegchros* (Greek), *Kibi* (Japanese), *Köles* (Hungarian), *Kosaejb* (Arabian), *Menéri* (Singhalese), *Mijo* (Spanish), Millet, *Millethirse* (German), *Millium* (Latin), *Pani-chamai* (Tamil), *Panico milia* (Esperanto), *Pani-varagu* (Tamil), *Proso* (Polish, Russian), Proso millet, *Proso seté* (Czech), *Proso siate* (Slovak), (German), *Rispenhirse* (German), Russian millet, *Sora* (Lithuanian), True millet, *Varagalu* (Telugu), *Varagu* (Tamil), *Varikora* (Tamil), *Wal-meneri* (Singhalese), and Wild proso millet.

Miliaceum is derived from Latin *milium* (millet).

Common millet has been cultivated in Asia (particularly China where it was a staple food) and southern Europe for thousands of years. It is believed that this may be the species that was grown by the Swiss lake dwellers at Robenhausen in about 8000 BC. There is reference to its use for bread-making in the Old Testament of the *Bible*. It was familiar to both the ancient Greeks and the Romans, and the latter are believed to have called it *milium*. The grain was often used to make a rough bread but more usually, not least today, it is made into a kind of porridge.

Today in North America it provides a commercial forage crop on a limited scale as well as birdseed for caged birds and poultry feed too.

In Western countries common millet is sometimes grown as an ornamental plant and when green or dried it can also feature in flower arrangements.

Medicinally, the plant has been used to treat some venereal diseases.