

### *Setaria italica*

[Synonyms : *Chaetochloa germanica*, *Chaetochloa italica*, *Chaetochloa italica* var. *germanica*, *Chamaeraphis italica*, *Chamaeraphis italica* var. *germanica*, *Ixophorus italicus*, *Panicum germanicum*, *Panicum germanicum*, *Panicum glomeratum*, *Panicum italicum*, *Panicum italicum* var. *californicum*, *Panicum italicum* var. *germanicum*, *Panicum viride* subsp. *italicum*, *Pennisetum germanicum*, *Pennisetum italicum*, *Setaria californica*, *Setaria germanica*, *Setaria italica* var. *germanica*, *Setaria italica* var. *metzgeri*, *Setaria italica* var. *stramineofructa*, *Setaria viridis* subsp. *italica*, *Setariopsis italica*]

**FOXTAIL BRISTLE-GRASS** is an annual grass. Of unknown origin but probably native to Asia (India in particular) it has bristly green (often yellowish) or purplish spikelets.

It is also known as *Awa* (Japanese), *Bar vlašský* (Slovak), *Bér italský* (Czech), *Bér vlašský* (Czech), *Boermanna* (Afrikaans), *Borstenhirse* (German), Bottle grass, Chinese corn, *Dari* (Turkish), *Dukhn* (Arabic), Durra, *Faagn haang maa* (Thai), Foxglove millet, Foxtail millet, *Gal* (Persian), German millet, *Giers* (Afrikaans), *Hirse* (German), Hungarian millet, Indian millet, Italian bristle-grass, Italian millet, Japanese millet, *Kaguno* (Nepalese), *Kakun* (Bengali), *Kangni* (Bengali, Hindi, Punjabi), *Kangu* (Sanskrit), *Khaao faagn* (Thai), *Khre* (Nepalese, Tibetan), *Kolbenhirse* (German), *Kolvhirs* (Swedish), *Koralu* (Telugu), *Lebelebele* (African - Sotho), *Milho-painço* (Portuguese), Millet (English, French), *Millet d'Italie* (French), *Millet d'oiseau* (French), *Mukombi* (Kikuyu), Pigeon grass, *Pingni* (Kashmiri), *Riz allemand* (French), *Rókafarkú köles* (Hungarian), *Rumput ekur kuching* (Malay), *Sěkoi* (Malay), *Setario Italia* (Esperanto), *Shamai* (Tamil), Siberian millet, *Tana-hal* (Singhalese), *Tauna* (Malayalam), *Ten-nai* (Tamil), and *Tinai* (Tamil).

*Italica* means 'of or from Italy'.

This grass has provided man with food for thousands of years. Familiar to the European Swiss lake dwellers at Robenhausen (whose remains date back to 8000 BC) foxtail bristle-grass was also known to the Chinese. Records show that it was being held sacred by them certainly in about 2700 BC.

In northern European countries foxtail bristle-grass was harvested from the Middle Ages until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Despite the fact that it was not a cultivated crop it was sufficiently important to feature in foreign trade, particularly among Slav and Baltic peoples. Its significance in some areas is well illustrated by the fact that in Poland in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century it was one of 25 kinds of grain that attracted taxes there.

The green plant has been used as fodder for livestock other than horses in some countries.

Today it is grown for its edible grain particularly in India and Japan. In addition it is cultivated on a commercial scale not only for pasture and hay but also for birdseed.

Medicinally, the grain has been used in India externally to treat rheumatism.