

## *Digitaria ternata*

### **Nomenclature:**

Family: Cyperaceae

Species: *Digitaria ternata* (A. Rich.) Stapf

### **Synonyms:**

*Digitaria argyrostachya* (Steud.) Fern.

*Digitaria ropalotricha* Büse

*Cynodon ternatus* A. Rich.

*Panicum ternatum* (A. Rich.) Hochst. ex Steud.

*Panicum ternatum* (Hochst. ex A. Rich.) Steud.

*Panicum rapalotrichum* Büse ex Koord

*Panicum argyrostachya* Steud.

*Panicum phaeocarpum* var. *gracile* Nees

*Paspalum ternatum* (A. Rich.) Hook. F.

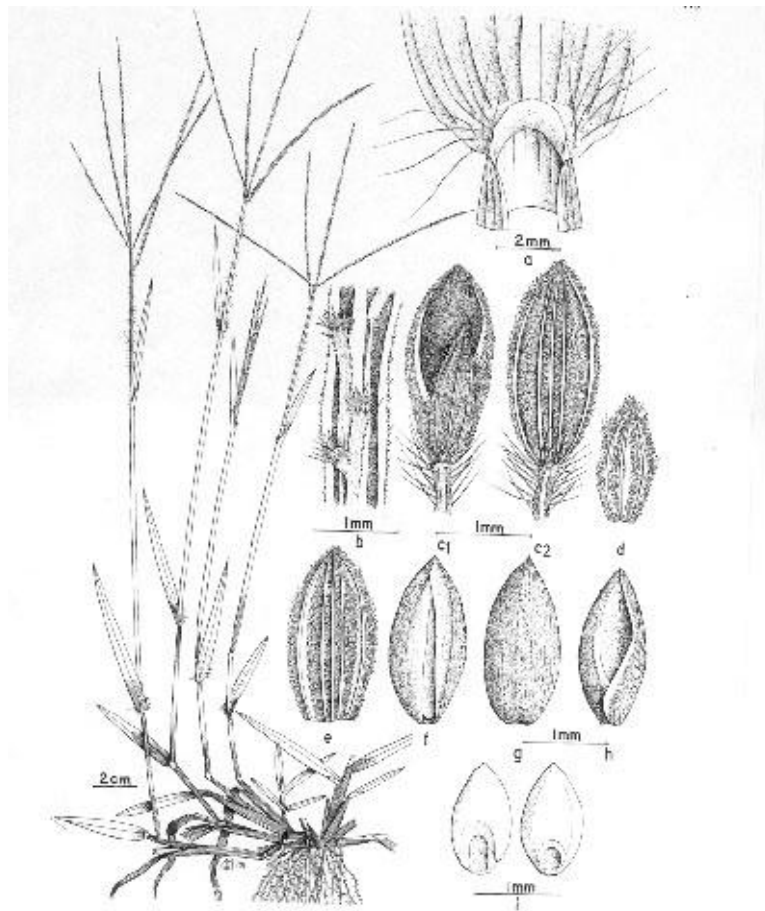
*Syntherisma ternata* (A. Rich.) Newbold

*Syntherisma argyrostachya* (Steud.) Hitchc. & Chase

**Common Names:** crab grass; black-seed finger grass (South Africa); soet (vinger) gras and swaart vigergras (Afrikaans); jampang piit (Sundarese); gangsirani (Javanese); tampula and chittrey banso (Bhutan); tsinde (Zimbabwe); huffeh, makwella, and tahakh (Ethiopia)

**Bayer Code:** DIGTE

**Description:** Loosely tufted annual; culms 20-100 cm high, ascending. Leaf-blades 5-25(-40) cm long x 3-8 mm wide. Inflorescence of 2-11 subdigitate racemes, each 3-23 cm long, the spikelets ternate on a ribbon-like winged rachis with shallowly angular midrib; pedicels nearly always with a corona of hairs 0.2-1 mm long at the tip. Spikelets ovate-elliptic, 1.8-2.7 mm long; lower glume an obscure hyaline rim; upper glume 2/3-4/5 as long as the spikelet, 3-nerved, densely pubescent with clavate hairs; lower lemma as long as the spikelet, 5(9)-nerved, typically with the three central nerves close together and the hairs confined to a stripe on the outside of each lateral nerve, but sometimes hairy all over, the hairs clavate and nearly always slightly exceeding and concealing the lemma-tip, their length varying from appressed pubescent to shaggy pilose (0.2-0.8 mm); fruit elliptic, dorsally flattened, dark brown to black (Clayton and Renvoize, 1982).



*Digitaria ternata*  
Kostermans *et al.*, 1987

**Distribution:**

Listed as “serious” (weed) in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda; “common” (weed) in Borneo, Sudan; “present” (as a weed) in China, Congo-Kinshasa (Zaire), Ghana, Rhodesia, Thailand, Zambia (Holm *et al.*, 1979)

Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, tropical and South Africa, Yemen, India, Thailand, China, Indonesia (Clayton and Renvoize, 1982)

Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique, Zaire, Burundi, Tanzania, Angola (Clayton, 1989)

Zimbabwe (Drummond, 1984)

Mexico, Argentina, Uruguay, Africa, South and Southeast Asia (Häfliger and Scholz, 1980)

Mali, Guinea, Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon (Hutchinson *et al.*, 1972)

Indonesia (origin tropical Asia), Australia, South America (Kostermans *et al.*, 1987)

India, Burma, China, Kenya—serious weed, Zimbabwe, Zaire, South Africa (Reed, 1977)

Ethiopia, Eritrea (Stroud and Parker, 1989)

Zambia (Vernon, 1983)

South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Swaziland, Mozambique (Wells *et al.*, 1986)

Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, China, Yemen, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines, Thailand (GRIN, 2001)



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**Biology and Ecology:** *Digitaria ternata* is a very widespread and successful weed, recorded by Holm *et al.* (1979) as a “principal” weed in Israel and Jordan and a “common” weed in Australia, Lebanon and Morocco. It can be abundant in upland rice in Indonesia (Kostermans *et al.*, 1987), is common in cereal crops in Ethiopia (Stroud and Parker, 1989) and can be serious in cereal crops in East Africa (Terry, 1984). Reed (1977) notes it as a weed of arable land, frequently invading pastures. Wells *et al.* (1986) list it as behaving as a ruderal, agrestal, and pasture weed in South Africa, competitive and able to replace other vegetation. *Digitaria ternata* has the potential to be introduced accidentally in agricultural produce from many different sources and to have considerable impact on crops and on natural vegetation.

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