

Cyperus papyrus

Scientific classification

Kingdom : Plantae
Clade : Angiosperms
Clade : Monocots
Order : Poales
Family : Cyperaceae
Genus : *Cyperus*
Species : *C. papyrus*



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DESCRIPTION:

This tall, robust, leafless aquatic plant can grow 4 to 5 m (13 to 16 ft) high. It forms a grass-like clump of triangular green stems that rise up from thick, woody rhizomes. Each stem is topped by a dense cluster of thin, bright green, thread-like stems around 10 to 30 cm (4 to 10 in) in length, resembling a feather duster when the plant is young. Greenish-brown flower clusters eventually appear at the ends of the rays, giving way to brown, nut-like fruits.

The younger parts of the rhizome are covered by red-brown, papery, triangular scales, which also cover the base of the culms. Botanically, these represent reduced leaves, so strictly it is not quite correct to call this plant fully "leafless".

MEDICINAL USES:

The pith was recommended for widening and drying of fistula. The main use seems to have been confined to burnt **papyrus** sheets, the ash of which was reputed to have the action of pulverised charcoal and was used in the treatment of certain eye diseases.