

Plants in Arid Lands and Their Utilization (4)

PART 4 : Dune



Dunes around Al Ain (Suleimat)

This issue describes sand dunes and vegetation around the dunes. The word "desert" brings about an image of far-stretching sand dunes and roaming camels. Some dunes are slowly moved by wind and sands are blown and accumulated in farmlands or roads around the dunes. Sands of dunes around Al Ain are homogeneous in particle size and reddish because the surface is covered with iron oxide. A herbaceous plant, such as *Cyperus conglomeratus* is widely seen in the dunes. *Hammada elegans*, *Haloxylon salicornicum* and *Panicum turgidum* are also typical herbaceous dune plants. A woody plant,

Prosopis cineraria can also be seen around or on the slope of the dune. The root of *Cyperus conglomeratus* is very long and the surface is covered with the material like cotton, so that the root can collect water easier.

1) *Cyperus conglomeratus*



Characteristics: Frequently seen in the dune area of the Arabian Gulf countries. Perennial grass, the height is around 60cm. When it is young, the color is green. Ripen seeds become brown and fall down in winter (December and January).

Condition of growth: Regarded as xerophytic and halophytic plant because it

grows in dune and coastal areas. Few report is available.

Use: Feed for camels.



2) *Hammada elegans*



Characteristics: Perennial grass which is seen around the dune. New shoots are green and succulent. As it grows, stems lignify gradually. Annual rings are seen inside the stem. Blossom season is September or October and the fruition starts simultaneously. The flower is yellow and the seed looks like a shuttlecock with pink, white and brown feathers.

Condition of growth: It grows on fixed dune or

desert. Germinates easily. Only few report is available about the growth conditions.

Use: The woody part is used as fuel. Feed for camels.



Seeds of *H. elegans*