TIGER GRASS FARMING AND BROOM MAKING

by

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Tiger grass (Thysanolaena maxima Kuntze syn. T. latifolia (Hornem) Honda) locally known as tambo, is a viable source of livelihood for upland communities. This plant can be a main crop or interspersed with fruit trees and other perennial crops.
TIGER GRASS

- Tiger grass produces panicles for a maximum period of 10 years.
- The government is promoting tiger grass farming to boost the broom industry in the country.
- Tiger grass is available in almost all regions in the Philippines.
METHODS

- Planting stock production
  - The common method to propagate tiger grass for better growth is by root stocks.
  - Uproot clump suckers of mature tiger grass. A one hectare plantation needs about 2,500 to 3,000 clumps, containing at least three emerging suckers.
  - Cut the upper portion leaving 10 cm of its vegetative part.
Site selection

- Tiger grass thrives in medium to high elevation, preferably in hillside slopes and logged-over areas.
Site preparation

- Clear the area if it is to be used solely for tiger grass production or spot clear if interspersed with agricultural crops.
- Dig a hole 30 cm in diameter and 3 cm deep with spacing of 2 m x 2 m if planted alone or 4 m x 4 m if interplant with other crops. Use contour planting.
Hauling and handling

- Haul planting stocks to the prepared planting site. Do not expose to direct sunlight.
- If possible, plant stock within the day of collection to reduce mortality.
PLANTATION ESTABLISHMENT

- Planting and fertilizing
  + Plant at least three suckers to the prepared hole. Plant during the onset of the rainy season to ensure good root and shoot development.
    - Tip: Intercrop tiger grass with cash crops for more profit.
  + Apply fertilizer once a year, before the onset of the rainy season. Organic fertilizer can be used. However, fertilization is not a usual practice but is done in some less productive soil.
PLANTATION ESTABLISHMENT

- Plantation maintenance and protection
  - Replant dead ones before the rainy season ends.
  - Weed once a year or as the need arises to minimize competition on soil nutrients, water and sunlight and to minimize fire hazard.
  - Protect the area from stray animals.
  - If possible, introduce Integrated Pest Management (IPM) to minimize pest problems.
HARVESTING AND HAULING

- The panicles usually develop from October to December and are harvested when the stalks are at least 70 cm long. Harvesting is done from December to March. The highest yield is observed on the 6th year of the plantation.

- Cut the panicles with a sharp scythe or bolo.

- Gather panicles and sun-dry for two to three days. Regularly turn the panicles for uniform and fast drying.
HARVESTING AND HAULING

- Slightly shake or pat dried panicles against stone or wood to remove seeds.
- Bundle 105 panicles for every broom.

  Tip: After the last harvest, cut all the remaining vegetative parts down to 30 cm for regeneration. New tillers will develop and the cut portion can be used as fodder for animals.

  Variation: Dried panicles can be dyed and used as novelty or decorative items.
BROOM PRODUCTION
MATERIALS

- 105 panicle (maximum)
- Kawayan or wooden stick
- Tie wire
- Plastic string on split rattan
PROCEDURE

- Use a bundle consisting of 105 panicles (number of panicles may vary depending on the desired thickness of the broom) to make one broom.
- Sort the panicles according to length.
PROCEDURE

- Shear some of its first spikelet (flowers) and ensure that an average remaining length is maintained.
- Tie these sheared spikelets to the main stem to add thickness to the broom.
**PROCEDURE**

- Maintain some of the stalks to serve as handle.
- Arrange the added spikelet (tightly bound with string) into five to six small bundles (1-1.5 cm diameter) and bind together to make one big bundle.
PROCEDURE

- Tightly bind together the stalks using tie wire to form the handle.
- Use wood or bamboo stick as handle. Bind together with the panicles.
PROCEDURE

- Arrange the panicles into fan-like form with plastic string or split rattan.
- Decorate the handle or wrap with rolled plastic or split rattan to indicate the origin of the product.
MARKETING CONSIDERATIONS

- There is no problem in marketing soft brooms as long as these are good in quality. It can be sold within the community where it is produced or anywhere in the Philippines.
MARKETING CONSIDERATIONS

- Brooms are sold in retail at P40/perpc and wholesale at P35/perpc. Price may increase depending on the decoration. Panicles can be sold to producers in the locality at P18 per bundle (can make one broom). During lean months, store panicles or brooms while waiting for a better market price.
ECOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

- Establishment of tiger grass is recommended. This will ensure not only the raw materials supply for the industries but also for the enhancement of the environment.
- Tiger grass is good in rehabilitating degraded areas. If planted at close spacing, it is effective for soil erosion control.
- Tiger grass farming is an environment-friendly livelihood. It serves as cover crop or hedgerow and helps minimize runoff and soil erosion in uplands.
THANK YOU!