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## LOCATION

**Physical address:** the National Herbarium and Botanic Garden is situated about 4 km North of the Harare city centre within the suburb of Alexandra Park, on the corner of Fifth Street extension and Downie Avenue. It is easily accessed from either Fifth Street or Sam Nujoma Street.

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## MANDATE

The National Herbarium and Botanic Garden is a centre for research and information on the indigenous plants of Zimbabwe. It is responsible for the study of Zimbabwe flora in order to promote its conservation, development and sustainable use. Its mission is: To increase knowledge and appreciation of Zimbabwean plants. It fulfills this mission by looking after the plant specimens that are the essential resource material required in studying plant characters in order to arrive at their identity and names. The National Herbarium stores preserved plant specimens while the living specimens are grown in the National Botanic Garden.

The institute has three interlinked sections: the herbarium, the botanic garden and the education centre.

The Herbarium has about 500 000 plant specimens. It is the main reference centre for research on identifying and naming plants of the Flora Zambesiaca Region. This region comprises Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique, Botswana and the Caprivi.

The Botanic Garden grows over 900 trees and shrubs of Zimbabwe in groups to show the associations that are found in various parts of the country. It has sections with trees of the Highveld, Lowveld and Eastern Highlands. Also growing are a number of trees from other countries that have climatic conditions similar to Zimbabwe e.g. Asia and Australia.

The Education Centre disseminates information on the plants of Zimbabwe and the plant kingdom in general to educational institutions especially schools.

The aims and objectives of the National Herbarium and Botanic Garden can be summarized as follows:

- i) to conserve, enhance and curate Zimbabwe's principal collection of botanical specimens for national and international reference and study;
- ii) to do scientific research and documentation on Zimbabwean plants and plant communities based on the herbarium collection and field surveys;
- iii) to provide botanical services to Government Departments, NGOs, students, researchers and the public;
- iv) to provide a focal point for the international network of herbaria, in order to facilitate research on the flora of Zimbabwe and the region by national and international researchers;
- v) to provide a pleasant and peaceful environment in which the Harare community can enjoy activities that are compatible with Botanic Garden management;
- vi) to raise revenue that will help in the development and maintenance of the National Herbarium and Botanic Garden.

## ADMINISTRATION

The National Herbarium and Botanic Garden is administered by the Division of Agricultural Research and Extension (AREX), in the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement, in conjunction with the Botanic Garden Fund Committee. The latter is a Board of Trustees who are appointed by the Minister of Agriculture. Their main role is to compliment government efforts in the running of the institute by raising funds. Some of the notable achievements of this committee in recent years include the fencing and upgrading of the public car park, the construction of the Restaurant, Desert House, Education Centre, Office Block of the nursery and the refurbishment of the National Herbarium. In short, the Botanic Garden Fund Committee spearheads almost all development projects at the National Herbarium and Botanic Garden.

**A checklist  
of  
Zimbabwean grasses**

by

**Christopher Chapano**



**2002**

**Southern African Botanical Diversity Network Report No. 16**



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## Contents

Introduction .....	1
Map of the Floristic Regions of Zimbabwe .....	2
Checklist of Zimbabwean grasses .....	3
Distribution maps of selected grasses .....	18
Index .....	23
References .....	25



**Education Centre in the National Botanic Garden.  
(Photo: Anthony Mapaura)**



**Desert House in the National Botanic Garden.  
(Photo: Anthony Mapaura)**



**Entrance to the National Herbarium. (Photo: Anthony Mapaura)**



**Botanic Garden Restaurant. (Photo: Anthony Mapaura)**



## Introduction

The flora of Zimbabwe comprises about 6 000 plant species belonging to over 200 families. Of this number, the grass family Poaceae, is the largest and can easily be considered as the most important. It accounts for about 540 species, 22 of which are naturalized, spread over 152 genera. This accounts for approximately 10% of the national vascular plant collection.

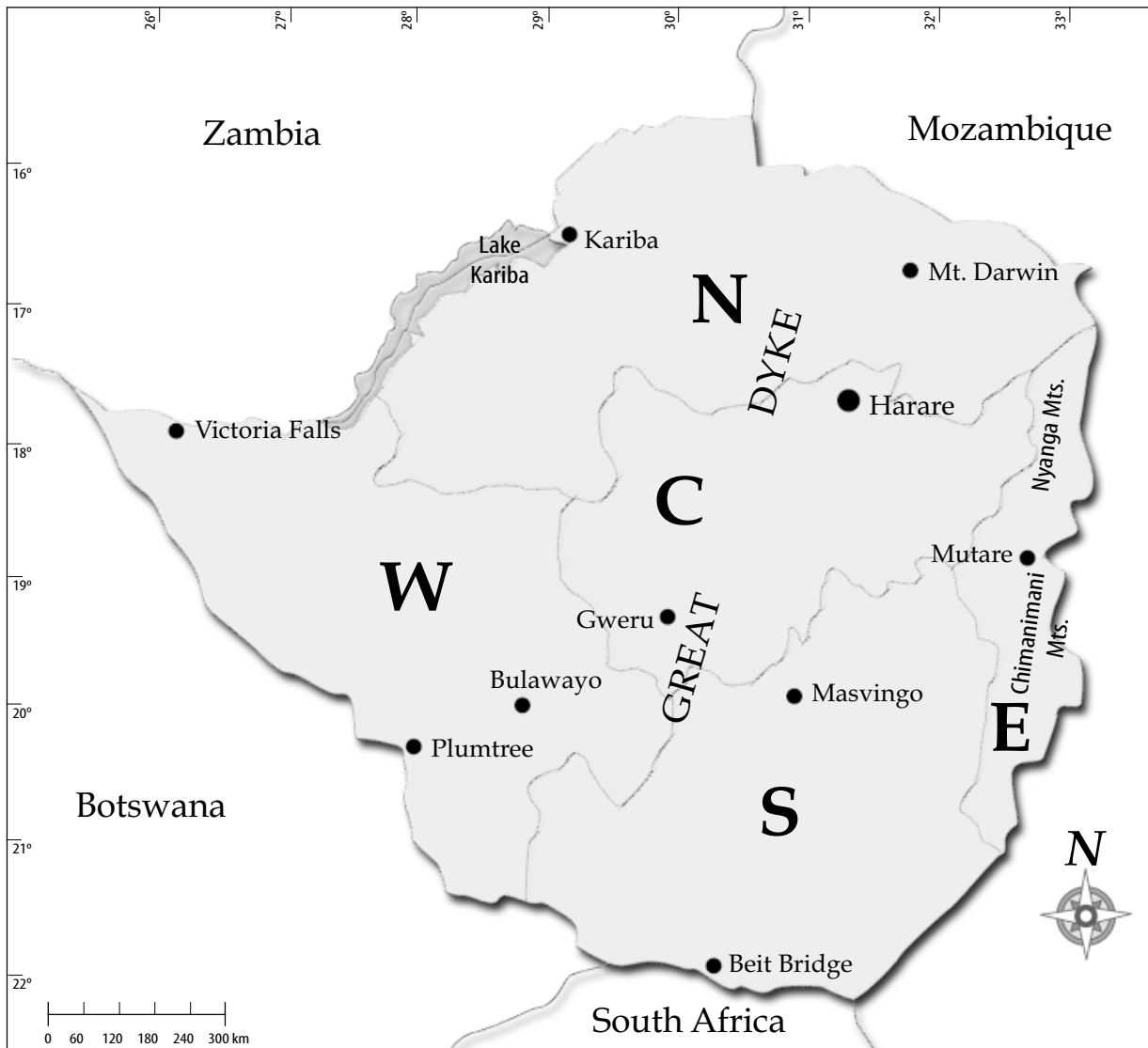
This checklist is derived from the grass collection that is housed at the National Herbarium of Zimbabwe (SRGH). The arrangement is numerical according to Clayton & Renvoize (1986). An alphabetical list is provided as an index to guide other users not familiar with the Clayton & Renvoize system. Synonyms were taken from the main references on the grasses of Zimbabwe—Fernandes *et al.* (1971), Bennett (1980), Launert & Pope (1989) and Pope (1999). Author citations for species follow Brummitt & Powell (1992) and Brummitt (1992) for genera.

The checklist is followed by maps showing the national distribution of 26 grass species which play an important role in the Zimbabwean economy and agriculture. Some species of *Oryza* and *Eleusine* are important as crops, while others like *Hyparrhenia* are of importance in the construction industry both at household level and for commercial use.

### Guide for using this checklist

- i) Accepted genus and species names are in bold print, e.g. ***Oxytenanthera abyssinica***. Author names of species are not given after the equal sign (=).
- ii) Synonyms are in italics, e.g. *Bambusa abyssinica*. Not all synonyms for a species are listed.
- iii) Naturalized taxa are preceded by an asterisk (\*) e.g. ***Festuca* \*arundinacea**. These are species that were introduced from outside Zimbabwe but now occur in the wild as part of the natural flora.
- iv) Letters after the author name(s) and separated by commas, indicate the distribution of species within Zimbabwe as reflected by the SRGH collection. A map showing these geographical divisions is given overleaf. N, northern; W, western; C, central; E, eastern; and S, southern.

## Map of the floristic regions of Zimbabwe



C, central; E, eastern; N, northern; S, southern; W, western.