**Herbal Garden (Muligai Vanam)**

**Vettiver**

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**Botanical Name** : *Chrysopogon zizanioides* (L.) Nash  
**Tamil Name** : Vettiver  
**Sanskrit Name** : Ushira  
**English Name** : Khas Khas grass

**Distribution and Habitat**

*Chrysopogon zizanioides* belonging to the family Poaceae is a perennial grass with thick fibrous adventitious roots which are aromatic and highly valued and widely distributed in India, Burma, Sri Lanka, and spread from Southwest Asia to tropical Africa.

The plant is a large tufted bunchgrass and can reach up to 1.5 metres (5 feet) in height. The roots clustered; 2 mm diameter; varying colour from cream to light yellow and sometimes even brown colour; and slightly bitter, pungent, and aromatic, grows densely in any soil type. The fragrant roots grow downward in the soil and can attain depths of more than 3 metres (10 feet). Leaves are tapered, straight, pointed with rough or scaly margins, around 30–90 cm in length and 4–10 mm in width, dark green in colour, present as six or more than six on each side. The thin leaves and stems are erect and rigid, and the plant bears small brown-purple flowers in long spikes. The plant is sometimes grown as a hedge and is useful in dry land restoration to reduce soil erosion.

**Parts used**

Leaf, stem and root.
**Phytochemical constituents**
Hydrocarbons, aldehydes, alcohols, esters, ketones, acids, terpenoids, sesquiterpenoids, phenols, nitrogenous compounds, alkaloids, flavonoids, tannins, and saponins.

**Uses**
The plant helps to stabilise soil and protects it against erosion, but it can also protect agricultural fields against pests and weeds. It is one of the most suitable plants to be used in purifying pre-treated wastewater effluent. It has favourable qualities for animal feed. From the roots, oil is extracted and used for cosmetics, aromatherapy, herbal skincare and ayurvedic soap. Due to its fibrous properties, the plant can also be used for handicrafts, ropes and more. Pulp is suitable for manufacturing paper and straw board.

**Medicinal uses**
The essential oil obtained from the herb gives a soothing and cooling effect. It is a nerveine tonic and reduces anxiety. It reduces pain and swelling and can also be used as a sleep inducing medicine (Balasankar et al. 2013). The roots are aromatic, antifungal action, antiemetic, diaphoretic, haemostatic, expectorant, diuretic, stimulant, mosquito repellent and antioxidants. The roots are used to treat hysteria, insomnia, skin diseases, asthma, amentia, amenorrhea, kidney problems, gall stones. The plant possesses hepato-protective, anti-tuberculosis, anti-diabetic, antidepressant, antiemetic, cytostatic, and antimicrobial action. The tribal people utilize every plant part of vettiver in different forms to serve various purposes like applying fresh roots for burns, snakebite, and scorpion sting by Santhal tribes of Bihar and West Bengal; root paste as a pain reliever for headache and rheumatoid arthritis, while the stem extract was utilized for urinary tract infection by Lodhas tribe of West Bengal; leaf juice is used as anthelmintic by Mandla and Bastar tribes of Madhya Pradesh; root vapour for malarial fever by tribes of the Varanasi district and root ash as an antacid by the Oraon tribe (Jain and Jain 2016).
**Home Remedies**

The water boiled with the roots of vetiver can be used for drinking especially during summer. The paste of vetiver roots, with sandal and aloe gel can be applied on burns, acnes, sun tans etc. The oil extracted from the root can be added to the water used for bathing, which acts as a natural fragrant. The oil when applied externally repels mosquitoes (Dr. Arya S Menon, 2017).

**Conclusion**

A continuous rise in research studies on *Chrysopogon zizanioides* (L.) Nash cultivation proves that this plant possesses the strong potential to provide therapeutic, economic, and environmental benefits to people worldwide.