



## *The Avicultural Society of New South Wales (ASNSW)*

*(Founding in 1940 as the Parrot & African Lovebird Society of Australia)*

*PO Box 248, Panania NSW 2213, Australia*

### **Umbrella Sedge Plants**

**(*Cyperus involucrucratus*)**

**(*Cyperus albostriatus*)**

*(ASNSW meeting - February 2013)*

**Presented by Paul Henry**

These plants are mainly for a finch collection. In a parrot collection they wouldn't exist very well at all. I have *Cyperus involucrucratus* and *Cyperus albostriatus* in my finch aviaries. They are both *Cyperus* umbrella plants, being just two plants that are part of a large genus of sedge plants. Both of the above species come from Africa. The weaver birds use these plants, pulling the leaves off whilst they are green and wrapping them around to build their nests.

I have had them in my aviary in clumps of about one metre around and I find that in winter the Gouldian finches will roost in them. They sit on the top. They are like a little platform and they will all just sit on those.

Being a sedge plant they like it very wet. A lot of people would grow them in a pot at the edge of a pond in shallow water. They have little seed pods on the top. The seeds which don't drop off turn into long little new plants so you can take those off and plant them again and they will grow into new plants. The plants that I have brought in this evening are probably looking a bit rough as I have had these particular plants planted in the part at the back of the aviary so they have been quite dry, but if they are grown in water, they have a softer leaf. When they are planted in a group in an aviary they come up quite nicely. *Cyperus involucrucratus* will grow up to about a metre in height.

The other *Cyperus* that I have growing at home is *Cyperus albostriatus*. It is also from African and apparently these plants grow where the Flamingos are. The same thing again with this *Cyperus*, the weaver birds will strip the leaves back and they use those green to build their nests. I have not seen Australian finches use the leaves at all but they certainly break off these little parts and eat them. All the little seeds on the top (which are in seed at the moment), the finches love them. You can either just cut them off or if they are planted in the aviary the finches will devour them. My *Neophemas* love them as well and they will eat the leaves, the whole lot. I put a clump in a holding cage. It was a decent sized clump and height and it's now down to the ground. They ate the whole lot, the stems, every little bit.



They are a good plant to have in mixed clumps in the aviary in that *Cyperus albostriatus* always looks a bit greener and they are lighter. They are easy to grow with their basic requirements being lots of water as I mentioned before. They will grow in full sun or part shade. *Cyperus albostriatus* grows to a maximum height of about 60cm. It is a shorter plant and bit softer in appearance.

Paul concluded his presentation by passing the examples of *Cyperus* he had brought with him around and offered to pass some of these plants onto anyone who may like to try them.

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