



Papyrus *Cyperus papyrus* 08-02



| <u>Hardiness</u> | <u>Exposure</u> | <u>Soil</u> | <u>Water</u> | <u>Flowers</u> | <u>Height</u> |
|------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| Zones 16, 17, 23, 24, H1, H2 | Sun or Shade | Grows well in rich moist soil or water | Ample water | Inconspicuous pale green | 6-10 feet tall |

Long on beauty and history, papyrus has been known and used by Man for millennia. Soft green clouds of papyrus lined the Nile River during the time of the pharaohs. In the Bible the infant Moses was found among the bulrushes, as *Cyperis papyrus* is also called. Ancient Egyptians kept records of their pyramid building activities on papyrus sheets, from which we get the word "paper." Today papyrus is appreciated for its beauty and is often used in ornamental landscapes especially in pools, ponds and containers. Like other sedges, the stem is triangular in cross section, and contains a white pith. Strips of this pith are soaked in water, then pounded together and dried to create paper. Like its cousin the umbrella sedge (*Cyperus involucratus*), the leaves of papyrus are short sheaths that wrap around only the lowest portion of each stem. The slender graceful stems arise from a network of thick woody rhizomes and grow to a height of 10 ft (3.1 m) tend to form large clumps of indeterminate width. They are topped by feathery clusters of wiry branched "spikes" that are 5-12 in (15.2-30.5 cm) in length and arranged in umbels (a spherical or flat-topped shape). A hundred or more of these multiply branched rays have their spikelets arranged to form a delicate sphere but these droop with age, as do we all. A small flower is held at the tip of each spikelet.