Paniceae, the largest tribe of the Gramineae family, consists of 71 genera with approximately 1400 species distributed mainly in tropical regions of the world (Roshevits, 1980). Economically important cultivated millets in the tribe include: pearl millet [*Pennisetum glaucum* (L.) R. Br.], foxtail millet [*Setaria italica* (L.) P. Beauv.], proso millet (*Panicum miliaceum* L.), and finger millet [*Eleusine coracana* (L.) Gaertner]. These millets reliably produce grain and forage under some of the most adverse growing conditions in the world. Grain from these millets feeds millions of people where the climate is too dry and the soils too infertile to grow most other grain crops. Following seed harvest, the fodder is used to feed livestock, for building material, and as a source of fuel. In the USA, Australia, and South America, the millets, and especially pearl millet are used almost exclusively as high quality forage crops for grazing, silage, and/or hay.

**PEARL MILLET**

**Taxonomic description**

Brunken (1977) and Jauhar (1981) outlined the complex taxonomic history of pearl millet. They cite references to pearl millet as early as 1576. In the second half of the 18th century, taxonomists confused the classification of the species by placing it in five different genera. In the 20th century, taxonomists agreed that it belonged in the genus *Pennisetum*; however, the species underwent several name changes, for example, *americanum*, *typhoides*, and *glaucum* (Jauhar and Hanna, 1998). Today most researchers recognize its correct name as *Pennisetum glaucum* (L.) R. Br.