

## RICE – A CROP?



Rice itself plays a huge role in our nutrition system. It is mostly consumed in the larger areas of the world's population, like Asia and Africa. But now even in parts of Europe the demand for rice is increasing drastically.

**DEFINITION** Rice is a type of grass, called *Oryza*, which belongs to a family of plants that includes other cereals such wheat and corn. We differ between two species of rice that are important to the human nutrition:

*Oryza sativa*, which can be grown worldwide and *Oryza glaberrima*, which can only be grown in parts of West-Africa.

Rice grain is rich in nutrients, vitamins and minerals and is the staple food for more than 3 billion people. The three biggest producers are China, India and Indonesia, followed by Bangladesh, Vietnam and Thailand..

**GROWTH** The growth duration of the rice plant takes 3–6 months, depending on the variety and the environment under which it is grown. During this time, rice completes two distinct growth phases: vegetative and reproductive.

The vegetative phase is subdivided into germination, early seedling growth, and tillering; the reproductive phase is subdivided into the time before and after heading, that is, panicle exertion. The time after heading is better known as the ripening period.

I hope this information expanded your knowledge on the plant, Asians are known for!