

SUMMARY

Cereals are the most important source of plant food to the man. They are considered a gift of ceres- Roman Goddess of Agriculture. All cereals belong to grass family (Gramineae or Poaceae). They are cultivated members of the grass family and as such are therefore monocotyledonous angiosperms. The common feature of cereals is the seed or grain, botanically known as caryopsis, in which the seed coat (testa) is fused with the ovary wall. Wheat belongs to the genus *Triticum aestivum* of the grass family. The genus is further subdivided into a number of species, which can be classified into types according to the number of pairs of chromosomes they contain: diploid (7 pairs), tetraploid (14 pairs), and hexaploid (21pairs) the hexaploid type is the major class of wheats, known as "common" wheat, whereas the tetraploid wheats are known as "durum" wheats. Wheat was originally cultivated in Persia (Iran), Egypt, Greece, and Europe.

Wheat is planted to a limited extent as a forage crop for livestock, and its straw can be used as a construction material for roofing thatch. The whole grain can be milled to leave just the endosperm for white flour. The by-products of this are bran and germ. The whole grain is a concentrated source of vitamins, minerals, and protein, while the refined grain is mostly starch. Wheat genetics is more complicated than that of most other domesticated species. Some wheat species are diploid, with two sets of chromosomes, but many are stable polyploids, with four sets of chromosomes (tetraploid) or six (hexaploid). Wheat which have a high protein (i.e., gluten, 12-14%) content are called "strong wheat or hard wheat" and generally used to produce bread, whereas those which have low protein (i.e., gluten, 8-11%) content are called "soft wheat or weak wheat" and generally used for making biscuits, cookies, and cakes.