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XX CONSULTATIVE MEETING

TRATADO ANTARTICO
XX REUNION CONSULTIVA

TRAITE SUR L'ANTARCTIQUE
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~~A GRASS (SEED PLANT) FOUND IN SYOWA STATION AREA,
EAST ANTARCTICA~~

~~(agenda item 21)~~

~~(Submitted by Japan)~~

A grass (seed plant) found in Syowa Station area, East Antarctica

The 37th Japanese Antarctic Research Expedition during the austral summer season in 1995-1996 has confirmed a kind of seed plant growing near Syowa Station (69°00'22"S, 39°35'24"E), East Antarctica. The grass was first observed last July approximately 25 km south of the station. The plant was found in a rock fissure about 5 m north of a small prefab house built for penguin study. The plant grows in a single tuft approximately 20 cm wide and it has dozen of green shoots about 20 cm tall (Fig. 1). This February, the plant had several flowers but not seeds (Fig. 2). Judging from the old shoots, the grass had survived for more than three winters. The grass was considered to belong to the family Gramineae.

After identification of the plant samples in Japan, the plant was assigned to be *Poa trivialis* L. This species is a kind of weedy plant originating from Europe to West Asia. At the present time, it spreads to the Southern Hemisphere, e.g. Chile, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, and Kerguelen Island. The plant is considered to be an alien plant introduced into the Antarctic botanical zone from the other continents or islands. However, additional studies are required to understand how the plant has been introduced into Antarctica. In the Antarctic botanical zone, accidentally introduced plants include *Poa annua* and *P. pratensis* which are found in Deception Island, and *P. annua* in King George Island, South Shetland Islands. The flora in the ice-free areas near Syowa Station is limited to certain kinds of mosses and lichens. This is the first report of a flowering plant growing in East Antarctica.

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