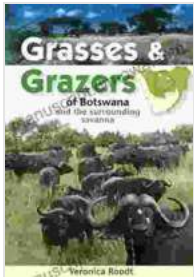


# Grasses: Grazers of Botswana and the Surrounding Savanna



## Grasses & Grazers of Botswana and the surrounding savanna by Veronica Roodt

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English  
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The vast and diverse savannas of Botswana and its neighboring countries are home to an astonishing array of grasses. These grasses are not only a vital part of the ecosystem, but they also serve as the primary food source for a wide variety of grazing animals. This comprehensive guide provides an in-depth look at the morphology, ecology, and significance of grasses in Botswana and the surrounding savanna.

## Morphology of Grasses

Grasses belong to the family Poaceae, and they are characterized by their jointed stems, parallel-veined leaves, and small, inconspicuous flowers. The stems of grasses are typically hollow, which makes them lightweight and flexible. The leaves are long and narrow, with a pointed tip. The flowers of grasses are arranged in clusters called spikelets. Each spikelet contains several flowers, each of which has two or three stamens and a single pistil.

Grasses can be classified into two main types: C4 grasses and C3 grasses. C4 grasses are more efficient at photosynthesis than C3 grasses, and they are therefore able to grow in hotter and drier climates. C3 grasses are more common in temperate climates.

## **Ecology of Grasses**

Grasses are found in a wide variety of habitats, from savannas to forests to wetlands. They are able to tolerate a wide range of environmental conditions, including drought, fire, and grazing. Grasses are also important for soil conservation. Their dense root systems help to hold the soil in place, preventing erosion.

Grasses play a vital role in the food chain. They are the primary food source for a wide variety of grazing animals, including wildebeest, zebras, elephants, and giraffes. Grasses also provide shelter and nesting sites for many birds and mammals.

## **Grasses and Grazing Animals**

The relationship between grasses and grazing animals is a complex one. Grazing animals can damage grass plants by eating their leaves and stems. However, grazing can also benefit grasses by stimulating new growth. When grazing animals eat the above-ground parts of a grass plant, the plant responds by sending out new shoots. This new growth can make the grass plant more productive and more resistant to drought.

The type of grazing animal that grazes on a particular grass species can also affect the morphology of the grass plant. For example, grasses that are grazed by large herbivores, such as elephants, tend to have thicker

stems and leaves than grasses that are grazed by smaller herbivores, such as zebras.

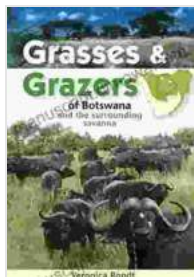
## Grasses in Botswana and the Surrounding Savanna

Botswana and the surrounding savanna are home to a wide variety of grasses. Some of the most common grass species include:

- Red grass (*Themeda triandra*)
- Thatching grass (*Hyparrhenia rufa*)
- Blue grass (*Bothriochloa insculpta*)
- Love grass (*Eragrostis curvula*)
- Buffalo grass (*Panicum maximum*)

These grasses are all important for grazing animals, and they play a vital role in the ecosystem of the savanna.

Grasses are a vital part of the ecosystem of Botswana and the surrounding savanna. They provide food and shelter for a wide variety of animals, and they help to conserve soil. This comprehensive guide has provided an in-depth look at the morphology, ecology, and significance of grasses in this region.



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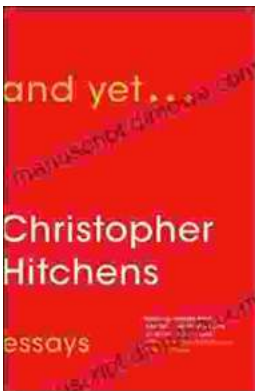
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