

# SISAL AND HENEQUEN, PLANTS YIELDING FIBER FOR BINDER TWINE

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## INTRODUCTION

The two hard fibers, sisal and henequen, are both commonly known in the market by the name sisal, or they are merely distinguished by the names Mexican sisal or Yucatan sisal for henequen, and African sisal, Java sisal, and Bahama sisal for the true sisal. The prices quoted indicate a difference in value. The true sisal commands a higher price except in the case of Bahama sisal, which is poorly prepared.

Sisal and henequen fibers are obtained from the leaves of two closely related but distinct species of the genus *Agave*. Both species originated in the Yucatan Peninsula, and they are not known elsewhere except as introduced plants. Both are cultivated on large plantations in the Tropics, and the fibers are cleaned by means of the same types of machines. Both fibers are used in the manufacture of binder twine and other hard fiber twines, and ropes of small diameter.

## SISAL

### DESCRIPTION

The sisal plant, *Agave sisalana* Perrine (fig. 1), has dark-green leaves 30 to 60 inches long and 4 to 5½ inches wide, smooth on the margins or with very small marginal prickles. Each leaf terminates