

ORNAMENTAL GRASSES

Ornamental grasses have much to offer in a landscape. They are very hardy, tolerant of poor soil and pH extremes, moisture and drought tolerant, and come in many varieties to fit any landscape need. They can add seasonal interest with fall color, persistent seed heads, and persistent leaves that last into the winter. Wind combined with grasses provides graceful movement and sound to the landscape.

Requirements

Sun is a must for most grasses. A few will tolerate the shade.

Drainage is needed for most grasses. A few varieties thrive in boggy conditions.

Planting

Amend poorly drained soils with 1/3 sphagnum peat moss or mushroom compost.

Dig a hole no deeper than your root ball and a few inches wider.

Loosen the root ball, place in hole, and backfill. The top of the root ball should be at ground level, no deeper.

Water with Fertilome Root Stimulator

Mulch with 2-4" of shredded hardwood bark, cypress mulch or cocoa hulls to retain moisture, moderate soil temperatures and control weeds.

Care and Maintenance

Fertilize during spring growth and again in late fall with a low nitrogen fertilizer such as *Fertilome Root n' Bloom* to prevent the grass from becoming weak and floppy.

Cut back the previous year's growth in the early spring before growth starts. Leave a few inches of old growth to prevent damaging the tender new shoots.

Divide plants in the spring if the plant has begun to spread and die out in the center. To divide, separate large clumps of the existing root system, and plant as outlined above.

Invasive types can be controlled from spreading too far by planting in a large sunken pot with an open bottom. Cut out or mow invasive shoots that are beyond desired boundaries.

Varieties

Sun and Drought Tolerant

Briza media-Quaking Grass 10-12" Foliage a low green tuft. Heart-shaped purplish inflorescences. Good for drying.

Calamagrostis arun. 'Karl Foerster'-Feather Reed Grass 5-6' Vertical habit, green leaves, golden inflorescences in early summer.

Calamagrostis acut. 'Overdam'-Reed Grass 2-3' Nicely variegated with white-edged leaves in compact clumps. Rose pink plumes in early summer.

Elymus aren. 'Glaucus'-Blue Lyme Grass 2-3' Metallic blue-gray foliage with a lax habit.

Erianthus ravennae-Ravenna Grass 4-5' foliage 10-14' plumes. Lush foliage.

Festuca glauca 'Elijah's Blue' 8" Evenly rounded dense tufts of thin blue grass blades, buff colored seed heads.

Festuca glauca 'Sea Urchin' 8" Similar to Elijah's Blue, color is silvery blue-gray.

Helictotrichon sempervirens-Blue Oat Grass 2' Clumping silvery blue evergreen foliage. Beige colored blooms in early summer.

Miscanthus floridulus-Giant Miscanthus 7-8' Bold plant. 1" wide dark green leaves. Blooms early October.

Miscanthus sin. 'Adagio'- Dwarf Maiden Grass 2' Silver-gray foliage. Inflorescences pink becoming white.

Miscanthus sin. 'Arabesque' - Maiden Grass 3-4' Compact grower, narrow green leaves with silver veins. Spectacular fluffy plumes.

Miscanthus sin. 'Bluttenwonder' - Maiden Grass 4-6' Beautiful blue tinged foliage. Massive bloomer.

Miscanthus sin. 'Graziella' - Maiden Grass 5-6' Rich green foliage. Large white inflorescences.

Miscanthus sin. 'Puenktchen' - Little Dot Zebra Grass 3' Narrow leaves. Plumes high above the foliage. **Miscanthus sin. 'Positano'-Maiden Grass** 5-7' Graceful grass with arching foliage and showy red inflorescences. Good fall-color.

Miscanthus sin. 'Purpurascens' - Purple Maiden Grass 3-5' Reddish foliage becoming deeper red as the season progresses. Cotton-like plumes.

Miscanthus sin. 'Sarabande' - Silver Grass 4-6' Fine silvery foliage.

Miscanthus sin. 'Silberpfeil' - Variegated Maiden Grass 6-8' Variegated green and white foliage. Blooms Sept

Miscanthus sin. 'Silberfeder' - Silver Feather Grass 4-6' Green foliage with silver midrib. Late summer silvery plumes. **Miscanthus sin. 'Gracillimus - Maiden Grass** 6-8' Graceful slender arching leaves. Upright flower stalks in Oct. **Miscanthus sin.**

'Morning Light' - Variegated Maiden Grass 4-5' Arching clumps, leaves edged in silver. Red-bronze plumes in late summer.

Miscanthus sin. 'Strictus'-Porcupine Grass 6' Erect habit. Green leaves with horizontal gold bars. Coppery blooms in Sept.

Miscanthus sin. 'Variegatus' Variegated Japanese Silver Grass 5-7' White-striped leaves with graceful floppy growth habit. Foliage turns almond-colored in the fall.

Panicum virgatum 'Haense Hermes' - Red Switch Grass 3-3 1/2' Compact habit. Bright red-orange fall color. **Panicum virgatum 'Heavy Metal' - Blue Switch Grass** 4-5' Very stiff upright plant with metallic blue leaves. Attractive airy blooms. Yellow fall color.

Panicum vir. 'Rotstrahlbusch' - Red Rays Switch Grass 3-4' Foliage has hints of reddish-brown through the summer intensifying to red in fall. Dark red-purple flowers becoming an airy mass of pink seedheads in late summer. **Pennisetum alop. 'Hameln'-Dwarf Fountain Grass** 24" Compact dark green clumps of leaves with a fine texture. Soft and airy blooms in late summer.

Pennisetum alop. 'Little Bunny'-Miniature Fountain Grass 11" Extremely dwarf. Petite very fluffy white blooms. **Pennisetum atop. 'Weserbergland'-Dwarf Fountain Grass** 1-2' Very similar to Hameln, only taller and a more spreading habit.

Pennisetum atop. 'Moudry'-Black Flowering Fountain grass 3' Striking black blooms over deep green foliage. Blooms in September.

Sorghastrum nutans - Indian grass 5-7' Native dumping prairie grass with tan-yellow panicles maturing to bronze in the fall.

Shade Tolerant

Calamagrostis arun. 'Brachytricha'-Fall-blooming Reed Grass 3' Blooms late summer, early fall. Foliage bright yellow in fall. Sun/part shade.

Chasmanthium latifolium-Northern Sea Oats 3' Clumping bamboo-like foliage, showy drooping inflorescences blooming green in spring and turning to coppery color in the fall. Tolerates shade.

Deschampsia caespitosa-Tufted Hair Grass 2' Cool season, deep green evergreen tufted grass. Best in wet areas. Showy inflorescences 2' above the plant blooming in June and persisting into winter. Part Shade.

Deschampsia caespitosa Schottland'-Scottish Tufted Hair Grass 2-3' Dark green foliage, buff-colored panicles 2 feet above the foliage. Best in rich moist soil. Sun or part shade.

Hystrix patula-Bottlebrush Grass '1-2' Clumping dark olive-green leaves with showy bristly flower heads which resemble bottlebrushes. Part sun/light shade.

Luzula nivea-Snowy Woodrush 8-12" Gray-green foliage covered with soft downy hairs. Fluffy large white inflorescences on spikes 12-16" above the foliage drying to tannish-brown. Shade.

Molinia caerulea arundinacea-Moor Grass 4-5' Large clumping green plant. Delicate yellow seed heads. Sun/part shade.

Phalaris awn. 'Feesey's Form'-Strawberries and Cream Ribbon Grass 12" Bright green and white striped foliage blushed with pink. Fast spreading. Sun/part shade.

Sorghastrum nutans 'Sioux Blue'-Sioux Blue Indian Grass 4' Beautiful metallic blue foliage. Part sun.

Grasses with good fall color

Calamagrostis arun. 'Brachytricha
Chasmanthium uniola latifolium
Miscanthus sin. 'Positano'
Miscanthus sin. 'Purpurascens'
Miscanthus sin. 'Variegatus'
Panicum virgatum 'Haense Hermes'
Panicum virgatum 'Heavy Metal'
Panicum virgatum 'Rotstrahlbusch'
Sorghastrum nutans

Grasses with blue or silver foliage

Elymus aren. 'Glaucus'
Festuca glauca 'Elijah's Blue'
Festuca glauca 'Sea Urchin'
Helictotrichon sempervirens
Miscanthus sin. 'Adagio'
Miscanthus sin. 'Bluttenwonder'
Miscanthus sin. 'Sarabande'
Miscanthus sin. 'Morning Light'
Panicum vir. 'Heavy Metal'
Sorghastrum nutans 'Sioux Blue'

Grasses with variegation

Calamagrostis acut. 'Overdam'
Miscanthus sin. 'Arabesque'
Miscanthus sin. 'Silberpfeil'
Miscanthus sin. 'Silberfeder'
Miscanthus sin. 'Strictus'
Miscanthus sin. 'Variegatus'
Phalaris arun. 'Feeseey's
Form'

Grasses that withstand moist conditions

Deschampsia caespitosa
Deschampsia caespitosa
'Schottland'