

Ornamental Grasses

Ornamental grasses are attractive landscape plants that can give gardens a new look.

Desirable traits include:

- Very few insect or disease problems
- Low nutrient requirements. Rarely need fertilization or irrigation after establishment, except in case of extreme drought or very sandy soil.
- Little maintenance once established. In early spring cut grass back to ground to remove the previous year's growth. If not cut back new growth is delayed and the plants look messy and half dead late into the growing season.
- More than one season of interest; flowering in spring, summer, or fall, with beauty and color lasting into winter
- Fast growth; for example, some large plants grow 5 to 8 feet tall by the second year
- Varied textures, from fine fescues to coarse giant miscanthus
- Foliage colors of blue, yellow, bronze, and red, as well as variegated white and yellow
- Movement with the wind, which provides interesting sounds as well as beauty.

Acorus

SWEET FLAG, 'GOLDEN VARIEGATED' GRASS

12" Wide part shade clump forming

Evergreen perennial grass with brilliant yellow-striped leaves. Grows in wet spots or normal garden soil. A winter mulch is recommended.

Alopecurus pratensis

FOXTAIL, 'VARIEGATED' GRASS

Height 1-2 ft. full sun clump forming

Yellow and green striped foliage with tan spikes in fall.

Calamagrostis

AVLANCHE FEATHER REED GRASS

Height 3-4 ft. full sun clump forming

Upright growth habit with beautiful variegated foliage. A wide white center to the leaf. It holds its variegation through the heat of the summer. Once established it is quite drought tolerant.

KARL FOERSTER GRASS

Height 4-5 ft. sun or part shade clump forming

Bright green foliage forms attractive mounds. Graceful, wheat-like pink flowers July turning beige in August. Non-invasive. Will not re-seed.

OVERDAM GRASS

Height 3-4 ft. sun to part shade clump forming

Very attractive variegated green foliage. Upright growth habit, narrow clumps. White flower heads fade to rose-pink.

Chasmanthium

NORTHERN, SEA OATS GRASS

Height 30-36 in. sun to part shade clump forming

The clumping, upright, light green bamboo-like foliage turns a copper color in late summer. The showy green flowers dangle like earrings. Best native grass for shade.

Deschampsia

TUFTED HAIR GRASS

Height 3 ft. sun to part shade clump forming

A cool season, evergreen grass that is hardy in Zone 4. Normally found in moist, boggy sites, and will do best in a moist site in partial shade. Produces delicate flowers in June that rise 2 ft. above the plant and remain showy into the winter.

Erianthus Ravennae

HARDY PAMPAS GRASS

Height 8-10 ft. full sun clump forming

Showy, 2 ft. long silvery-white silky plumes in early fall. Gorgeous fall coloring. Fast growing. Great specimen, screen or accent plant.

Festuca

BOULDER BLUE FESCUE GRASS

Height 8 in. full sun clump forming

Forms a beautiful little clump of upright foliage in shades of metallic blue. Tan seed heads rise 6 in. above clump in summer. Best in well-drained soils

Festuca

ELIJAH BLUE FESCUE GRASS

Height 6-10 in. full sun clump forming

Small with attractive fine-textured blue foliage. A cool season grass. Grown for the foliage. In hot spells may brown out, but revives with the onset of cooler weather.

Helictotrichon Sempervirens

BLUE OAT GRASS

Height 30 in. full sun clump forming

Bright steel blue foliage with flowers in early summer on long arching stems. Perfect dome shaped clumps. It prefers cooler weather and adequate moisture for the root system.

Miscanthus Varieties

FLAME GRASS

Height 4-5 ft. sun to part shade clump forming

A warm season grass. Has magenta colored foliage in late summer. Upright grower. In fall leaves color to a bright red-orange before fading to a silken white in winter. Silver-pink seed heads. A ten year old specimen can be 30" or more across.

PORCUPINE GRASS

Height 5-7 ft. full sun clump forming

Horizontal yellow and green striped leaves. Very upright and clump forming. Will grow in shallow ponds.

SILVERFEATHER GRASS

Height 6-8 ft. full sun clump forming

Large silver-white plumes in late August. Clumping grass with bold green blades that turn golden bronze in fall. Great specimen plant. Fast growing.

Molinia

SKYRACER GRASS

Height 3 ft. full sun clump forming

A striking ornamental grass valued for its tall delicate inflorescences spikes up to 5 feet long that are more rigid and upright with slight arch. Golden color in fall. Long lived with little maintenance. Best as a single specimen.

VARIEGATED MOOR GRASS

Height 2 ft. sun to part shade clump forming

Compact green leaves with gold stripe. Showy purple seed heads in summer on yellow stems. In fall a pink tinge appears on the foliage.

Panicum virgatum

HEAVY METAL GRASS

Height 3-4 ft. full sun clump forming

Stiff, upright, metallic blue leaves form a tight clump. Flowers are 12-16 inches above the foliage. Bright yellow fall color.

SHENANDOAH SWITCH GRASS

Height 3 ft. full sun clump forming

What really sets this grass apart from other cultivars is the incredible red hues to the leaves, making it a stand out in the garden. Foliage and blooms began to color up by June. It is bound to be a winner. Likes well-drained soils.

Pennisetum

FOUNTAIN DWARF GRASS

Height 2-3 ft. full sun clump forming

Very striking dark green foliage with creamy white flower heads that wave gently in breeze.

Sporobolus heterolepis

PRAIRIE DROPSEED GRASS

Height 2-3 ft. full sun clump forming

This Native American prairie plant forms a beautiful upright, arching clump. Slow-growing, but worth the wait. The emerald green foliage is fine-textured. The flowers appear in August, the 6-8" panicles rise over 2-3' above the foliage and have a sweet fragrance. Once the seed ripens, they droop over. In autumn, the plant turns a golden yellow, sometimes with orange hues, and then the entire plant turns a light brown for the winter months. Extremely heat and drought tolerant.

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