



**NEW GARDEN
LANDSCAPING & NURSERY**

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Ornamental Grasses

Bold colors, vivid variegation, graceful arching leaves, subtle feathery flowers — all these features make ornamental grasses a valuable addition to any landscape. Useful as specimens, borders, masses, or accents, most of these grasses prefer full sun, but many tolerate partial shade. Still others are perfect for moist or boggy conditions. You can also bring these plants inside: most varieties have feathery flowers perfect for drying as accents in interior floral arrangements. Numerous varieties exist; those listed below are some of our favorites for this area.

BUYING

While we pick our grasses from those that do well here, plants in containers are subject to abnormal winter stress. For this reason, always look for signs of new growth when buying in early spring.

PLANTING

The roots of most grasses are very aggressive, and plants can become root-bound when left too long in containers. (In this situation, the roots grow horizontally around the circumference of the container.) Loosen or cut these roots to break the pattern and allow for new growth. Follow New Garden's planting guidelines and water well for successful growth.

CUTTING BACK

Most ornamental grasses are perennials and do need to be cut back while dormant. They provide an attractive touch to the winter landscape, though, so cut back (nearly to the ground) in early Spring. Always wear gloves (some of the varieties have extremely sharp leaves) and cut back small grasses with pruners or shears. Larger, established grasses can be cut back with a scythe or power trimmer (some, like Pampas grass, can even be mowed!).

DRYING FLOWERS

Dried grasses are great for indoor decorating. They can be cut at any time during flower or seed (even spray-painted with metallic colors), but, for best effect, cut when flowers are well-developed but not yet fully open. Stand them loosely arranged in a vase and put them in a cool, well-ventilated place and let them dry. In a short time, the flower heads will

open and fluff out.

DIVIDING

One of the best things about ornamental grasses is that they can be divided to increase the number of plants in your landscape or to share bits of your garden with friends and family. "Clump" grasses can be divided by digging them up, gently splitting the roots in half (using tools as required), and replanting the halves into pots (or the ground) in a sandy-mixed soil with plenty of water and a high-phosphorous fertilizer. Other grasses spread by rhizomes, swollen underground stems. To divide these plants, dig around the grass to expose the outer rhizomes with new shoots. Cut the rhizomes into pieces, each with at least one shoot. Place each piece into a pot of sandy mixed soil with the shoots exposed and the rhizome just below the surface. Firm in and water well.

RESTRICTING GROWTH

As mentioned above, ornamental grasses and their roots can grow quite aggressively. Most can be contained in a small space by limiting the growth of roots. Simply dig a slit trench and install a quality vinyl landscape edging around the perimeter you want to control. More aggressive measures may be required in certain situations.

And now, some of our favorites . . .

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Ornamental Grasses cont.

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Japanese Sweet Flag - *Acorus gramineus*

This shade-loving plant thrives in moist conditions and will even grow in ponds. Slow-spreading, Sweet Flag's upright fans of slender leaves reach about twelve inches high. Variegated leaves are available in two colors: 'variagetus' has a white stripe, and 'Ogon's' vegetation is striped with gold.

Feather Reed Grass - *Calamagrostis x acutifolia* 'Karl Forster'

Karl Forster's Feather Reed Grass has an erect growth habit with foliage reaching from about two and one-half feet to five feet in height. It thrives in wet clay soils (good for us!) and will withstand partial shade. In June, flower stalks six feet high produce bright pink to red panicles that hold on through winter. Seed heads ripen from gold to silver. Cut back in spring.

Variegated Japanese Sedge - *Carex hachijoensis* 'Evergold'

An excellent ground cover, this plant reaches about one foot high and grows in clumps about two feet wide. It grows best in shade to part shade and possesses a bright cream to yellow variegation which, when planted in shade, holds up well through the winter. Cut back in early spring.

Northern Sea Oats - *Chasmanthium latifolium*

This three to four foot bamboo-like plant is green in the summer and tan in winter. It blooms in mid-summer and then develops a flat, oat-like seed head. Because it self-sows, it is best suited as a tall groundcover. Tolerant of both shade and dry conditions.

Pampas Grass - *Cortaderia selloana*

This well-known grass can reach heights of twelve feet and similar or greater width.

Creamy white flower plumes appear in July and persist through the winter, making them a fine choice for dried flower arrangements. Plant in full sun where you have plenty of room.

Dwarf Pampas Grass - *Cortaderia selloana* 'Pumila'

This compact Pampas requires full sun. Its foliage will grow to just over three feet, while its flower plumes reach five to six feet. Excellent for smaller spaces.

Blue Fescue - *Festuca ovina* 'Elijah Blue'

A handsome groundcover, 'Elijah Blue' fescue forms pincushions of blue foliage eight to ten inches high. Can be used as a specimen or in small groups. Semi-evergreen in mild winters, blue fescue performs best in afternoon shade. Plant in a well-drained location and cut back in fall or spring to keep plants neat.

Maiden Grass - *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Gracillimus'

This Miscanthus forms vase-shaped clumps five to seven feet high and develops outstanding reddish fan-shaped flower plumes in September. The individual leaf blades are thin and silver-veined. Maiden grass works well as a specimen or in groups. This variety requires full sun.

'Morning Light' Maiden Grass - *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Morning Light'

This variety is very similar to maiden grass, except that its leaf blades display creamy white margins.

Purple Maiden Grass - *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Purpurescens'

Its foliage is green in summer and turns orange-red and/or gold in fall. Growing to about four feet, this upright grass produces an early ma-



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"Where your imagination takes root"

Ornamental Grasses cont.

genta-colored bloom which turns white and lasts all winter. Needs full sun and prefers moist sites. Perfect as an accent around water features.

Variegated Maiden Grass - *Miscanthus sinensis 'Variegatus'*

This eye-catching variety has distinct bands of cream and green on the foliage. Grows to six feet in height and blooms late. A good variety for areas with partial shade.

Zebra Grass - *Miscanthus sinensis 'Zebrinus'*

Zebra grass makes a soft, open clump about six to eight feet high. Its unusual foliage is marked by horizontal "striped" bands of yellow and gold. Creamy-white flower plumes open in September.

Fountain Grass - *Pennisetum alopecuroides*

This popular grass has a clumping, tuft-forming habit reaching three to four feet in height. Its feathery, rose-colored flowers appear in mid-summer and its fall and winter color is an attractive almond. Will tolerate light shade. The variety 'Moudry' is a black flowering form with an incredible dark seed color.

Dwarf Fountain Grass - *P. alopecuroides 'Cassian'* and *'Hameln'*

Both these species reach two feet in height. Hamelin is a dwarf replica of the species, while 'Cassian' possesses a nice orange-red fall color.

Little Bunny Fountain Grass - *P. alopecuroides 'Little Bunny'*

Smaller than the dwarf varieties, 'Little Bunny' is a true miniature. Grows to about one foot and makes a perfect rock garden accent or perennial groundcover.

