East Bay Nursery

Fountain Grass

Pennisetum setaceum



Fountain Grass
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 4 feet

Spread: 3 feet

Sunlight: ○

Hardiness Zone: 8b

Description:

A shapely variety of fountain grass used as a focal point in the garden or containers; forms an upright clump of grassy green leaves bearing showy reddish bottlebrush flowers from late summer into winter, good winter value; may be treated as an annual

Ornamental Features

Fountain Grass has masses of beautiful plumes of red flowers with tan overtones rising above the foliage from late summer to mid fall, which are most effective when planted in groupings. Its grassy leaves are green in color. As an added bonus, the foliage turns a gorgeous brick red in the fall.



Fountain Grass flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Fountain Grass is an herbaceous perennial grass with a shapely form and gracefully arching stems. It brings an extremely fine and delicate texture to the garden composition and should be used to full effect.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and is best cleaned up in early spring before it resumes active growth for the season. Deer don't particularly care for this plant and will usually leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Fountain Grass is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Mass Planting
- Rock/Alpine Gardens
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Fountain Grass will grow to be about 4 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 3 feet. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 10 years. As an herbaceous perennial, this plant will usually die back to the crown each winter, and will regrow from the base each spring. Be careful not to disturb the crown in late winter when it may not be readily seen!

This plant should only be grown in full sunlight. It is very adaptable to both dry and moist growing conditions, but will not tolerate any standing water. It is considered to be drought-tolerant, and thus makes an ideal choice for a low-water garden or xeriscape application. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This species is not originally from North America. It can be propagated by division.

Fountain Grass is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. Because of its height, it is often used as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants and those that spill over the edges. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.