Lemon Grass

Cymbopogon flexuosus



Lemon Grass foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 4 feet

Spread: 30 inches

Sunlight: ○

Hardiness Zone: 8b

Description:

A frost-tender clumping perennial grass that is widely used in Southeast Asian cuisine for its lemony flavoring; it is also an impressive ornamental grass with gracefully arching, strap-like leaves that are light green; will grow near black walnuts

Edible Qualities

Lemon Grass is a perennial herb that is typically grown for its edible qualities, although it does have ornamental merits as well. The fragrant grassy light green leaves with hints of gray can be harvested at any time in the season. The leaves have a zesty taste.

The leaves are most often used in the following ways:

- Cooking
- Seasoning
- Freezing
- Tea

Features & Attributes

Lemon Grass' attractive fragrant grassy leaves remain light green in color with hints of gray throughout the year on a plant with an arching habit of growth.

This is an herbaceous evergreen perennial herb with a shapely form and gracefully arching stems. Its medium texture blends into the garden, but can always be balanced by a couple of finer or coarser plants for an effective composition. This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and is best cleaned up in early spring before it resumes active growth for the season. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Aside from its primary use as an edible, Lemon Grass is sutiable for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Herb Gardens
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Lemon Grass will grow to be about 4 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 30 inches. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 10 years. As an evegreen perennial, this plant will typically keep its form and foliage year-round.

This plant is quite ornamental as well as edible, and is as much at home in a landscape or flower garden as it is in a designated herb garden. It should only be grown in full sunlight. It does best in average to evenly moist conditions, but will not tolerate standing water. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in rich soils. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This species is not originally from North America. It can be propagated by division.

Lemon Grass is a good choice for the edible garden, but it is also well-suited for use 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.