Small Cape Rush

Chondropetalum tectorum

Height: 30 inches

Spread: 4 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 9a

Other Names: syn. Elegia tectorum, Cape Thatching Reed

Description:

A dense, tufted clump of short, unbranched, dark green stems; brown sheaths at the joints drop off in summer, leaving dark nodes; clusters of dark brown flowers appear at the tips in summer to fall; drought tolerant, but appreciates water in spring

Ornamental Features

Small Cape Rush features showy clusters of dark brown flowers at the ends of the stems from late summer to late fall. Its grassy leaves emerge light green in spring, turning dark green in color with showy bluish-green variegation and tinges of khaki (brownish-green) the rest of the year.

Landscape Attributes

Small Cape Rush is a dense herbaceous evergreen perennial grass with a shapely form and gracefully arching stems. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other garden plants with less refined foliage.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and usually looks its best without pruning, although it will tolerate pruning. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Small Cape Rush is recommended for the following landscape applications;



Small Cape Rush foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Small Cape Rush
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

- Mass Planting
- Rock/Alpine Gardens
- General Garden Use
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Small Cape Rush will grow to be about 30 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 4 feet. Its foliage tends to remain dense right to the ground, not requiring facer plants in front. It grows at a medium 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 does best in full sun to partial shade. 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. This plant does not require much in the way of fertilizing once established. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in sandy soils, and is able to handle environmental salt. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is not originally from North America. It can be propagated by division.



Small Cape Rush flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Small Cape Rush is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. It can be used either as 'filler' or as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination, depending on the height and form of the other plants used in the container planting. 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.