

ORNAMENTAL GRASSES

HUMBER NURSERIES 'GREEN THUMB GUIDE'



**The Month of September is Ornamental Grass Festival Month.
30% Discount throughout the month of September on regular priced grasses.**

A new and completely different look can be introduced to your garden with ornamental grasses. Their upright, slender, arching forms are interestingly different from the shape of most shrubs and other perennials.

The colour ranges through mauve-amethyst shades of blue to gold and tan. Variegated leaves of green and white or green and gold add distinctive colour throughout summer and a few have added winter interest, maintaining dried foliage and plumes of flower heads even amidst snow and ice.

This Green Thumb Guide will present to you just an overview of the main genera we have to offer at Humber, with some main cultivars. For all varieties and descriptions, please refer to our price list PL914.

Ornamental grasses that seemed so new and revolutionary just a few years ago are now regarded as old friends. Their variety and ease of culture have made them essential landscape plants and there is an ornamental grass suitable for almost any garden situation.

HARDINESS OF GRASSES:

HARDY: These grasses have been proven hardy at Brampton and on our farm in Caledon.

VERY HARDY: Grasses that have been tested over many years at both The Agriculture Canada Research Station in Morden, Manitoba and at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum in Chanhassen, Minnesota.

HARDY, VERY HARDY 100% TWO YEAR GUARANTEE

TENDER = NO GUARANTEE OVER WINTER.

Must be used as an annual or lifted from the garden and stored indoors for winter. If you have a sunroom or space in a sunny window they can be kept growing or they can be cut back and kept in a cool room.

CULTURE AND MAINTENANCE: Ornamental grasses usually require minimal care throughout the growing season. The cultural practices vary depending on the plant's duration, either annual (horticultural annuals are included here as well) or perennial.

Annual grasses are grown from seed each year. For earlier flowering, the plants can be started indoors, or the seed can be grown directly in the garden after the danger of frost is past. Spacing for most plants is 6 to 12 inches apart. Almost all annuals prefer full sun and require only adequate moisture and fertile soil for good growth.

Perennial grasses can be grown from seed, but are usually purchased as plants. Spacing for plants approximately 4 feet tall is 2 to 3 feet apart; larger plants require more spacing whereas shorter plants can be spaced about 1 foot apart. Most perennials prefer full sun or, in some cases, partial shade. Many of the perennial grasses are showiest in late fall. For this reason, it is desirable to carry out the cultural practices of division and cutting the plants back to the ground in early spring. The practice of cutting the plants back within 6 inches from the ground is especially desirable for large, dense plants. Removing the previous year's growth has the following advantages:

- (1) ensures vigorous growth,
- (2) acts as a pruning method for removal of dead stems
- (3) creates a more-attractive plant.

Division of perennials should occur about every 7 to 10 years. Some species can grow in place for several years and actually look best when allowed to do so. All divisions should be made when the plants are dormant or just before they begin to grow in early spring. The need for division is determined by the appearance of the new growth in the spring. If a plant shows signs of growth only around the edges and not in the center, the middle of the plant is probably dead and the plant should be divided. Grasses that show uniform new growth can be left in place for a longer period of time.

The only cultural practice that may be necessary is staking the flowering stems of some of the larger plants. If the plants are grown in shady locations with very fertile soil, staking may be necessary.

Areas of interest and uses for your Ornamental Grasses.

NATIVE GRASSES & GRASS-LIKE PLANTS

Sweet Flag	Acorus calamus
Big Blue Stem	Andropogon gerardii
Little Blue Stem	A. scoparius (Schizachyrium s.)
Side Oats Grama	Bouteloua curtipendula
Mosquito Grass	Bouteloua gracilis
Prairie Brome	Bromus kalmii
Bluejoint Grass	Calamagrostis canadensis
Morningstar Sedge	Carex grayi
Porcupine Sedge	C. hystericina
Palm Leaf Sedge	C. muskingumensis
Pennsylvania Sedge	C. pensylvanica
Plantain Sedge	C. plantaginea

Cyperus Sedge	C. pseudocyperus
Fox Sedge	C. vulpenoides
Northern Sea Oats	Chasmanthium latifolium
Tufted Hair Grass	Deschampsia caespitosa
Canadian Wild Rye	Elymus canadensis
Wild Rye	E. virginicus
Blue Fescue	Festuca ovina glauca
Red Fescue	F. rubra
Rattlesnake Grass	Glyceria canadensis
Manna Grass	G. maxima
American Manna Grass	Glyceria grandis
Fowl Manna Grass	G. striata
Sweet Grass	Hierochloa odorata
Bottlebrush Grass	Hystrix patula
Soft Rush	Juncus effusus
Corkscrew Rush	J. e. spiralis
Crested June Grass	Koeleria cristata
Rice Cut Grass	Leersia oryzoides
Switch Grass	Panicum virgatum & cultivars
Reed Canary Grass	Phalaris arundinacea
Common Reed	Phragmites australis
American Bulrush	Scirpus validus
Indian Grass	Sorghastrum nutans
Salt Reed Grass	Spartina cynosuroides
Cord Grass	S. pectinata
Variiegated Cord Grass	S. p. aureomarginata
Slender Cattail	Typha angustifolia
Cattail	Typha latifolia
Cattail	Typha ssp.

NATURAL LANDSCAPES - Meadow or Prairie

Plantings

Foxtail Grass	Alopecurus pratensis
Yellow Foxtail	A.p. aureus
Big Blue Stem	Andropogon gerardii
Little Blue Stem	A. scoparius (Schizachyrium s.)
Sweet Vernal Grass	Anthoxanthum odoratum
Side Oats Grama	Bouteloua curtipendula
Mosquito Grass	B. gracilis
Quaking Grass	Briza media
Golden Brome	Bromus inermis 'Skinner's Gold'
Prairie Brome	B. kalmii
Bluejoint Grass	Calamagrostis canadensis
Tufted Hair Grass	Deschampsia caespitosa
Canadian Wild Rye	Elymus Canadensis
Wild Rye	E. virginicus
Crested June Grass	Koeleria cristata
Pearl Grass	Melica ciliata
Melic Grass	M. transsylvanica
Red Melic	M. t. 'Atropurpurea'
Silver Banner Grass	Miscanthus sacchariflorus
Switch Grass	Panicum virgatum & cvs
Meadow Fountain Grass	Pennisetum flaccidum
Timothy Grass	Phleum pratense
Indian Grass	Sorghastrum nutans
Prairie Dropseed	Sporobolus heterolepis

GROUNDCOVERS IN SUN

Quaking Grass	Briza media
Sedges	Carex
Tufted Hair Grass	Deschampsia cultivars
Fescue	Festuca varieties
Blue Moor Grass	Sesleria caerulea
Autumn Moor Grass	S. Autumnalis

* All varieties listed as groundcovers for shade can be grown in full sun if the soil is moist.

GROUNDCOVERS IN SHADE OR PART SHADE

Frosty Curl Sedge	Carex albula
Hair Sedge	Carex comans
Dwarf Variegated Sedge	Carex conica 'Hime Kansugi'
Blue Sedge	C. glauca
Japanese Sedge	C. japonica
Morrow's Silver Sedge	C. morrowii variegata
Morrow's Golden Sedge	C. m. Aureovariegata
Palm Sedge	C. muskingumensis
Black Flowered Sedge	C. nigra
Drooping Sedge	C. pendula
Pennsylvanian Sedge	C. pensylvatica
Plantain Sedge	C. plantaginea
Red Fescue	Festuca rubra
Lily Turf	Liriope cultivars
Wood Rush	Luzula nivea and sylvatica
Mondo Grass	Ophiopogon cultivars

SCREENING- For boundaries, hedging or natural snow fence.

Feather Reed Grass	Calamagrostis acutiflora
Plume Grass	Erianthus ravennae
Giant Miscanthus	Miscanthus floridulus
Eulalie	Miscanthus cultivars
Cord Grass	Spartina pectinata

FOR CUT FLOWERS & DRYING

Mosquito Grass	Bouteloua gracilis
Annual Quaking Grass	Briza maxima
Perennial Quaking Grass	Briza media
Feather Reed Grass	Calamagrostis acutiflora
Fall Reed Grass	C. brachytricha
Northern Sea Oats	Chasmanthium latifolium
Pampas Grass	Cortaderia cvs
Plume Grass	Erianthus ravennae
Eulalie	Miscanthus varieties
Switch Grass	Panicum varieties
Fountain Grass	Pennisetum varieties
Common Reed Grass	Phragmites

WATERSIDE PLANTINGS

Giant Reed	Arundo donax
Variiegated Reed	A. d. variegata
Feather Reed Grass	Calamagrostis acutifolia
Fall Reed Grass	C. brachytricha
Tufted Hair Grass	Deschampsia varieties
Manna Grass	Glyceria varieties
Pearl Grass	Melica ciliata
Eulalie	Miscanthus varieties
Purple Moor Grass	Molinia varieties
Gardener's Garters	Phalaris varieties
Common Reed	Phragmites
Cord Grass	Spartina varieties

WINTER INTEREST – EVERGREEN

Sweet Flag	Acorus varieties
Sedge	Carex varieties
Fescue	Festuca varieties
Lily Turf	Liriope varieties
Wood Rush	Luzula
Blue Moor Grass	Sesleria caerulea

FALL COLOUR

Feather Reed Grass	<i>Calamagrostis acutiflora</i>
Plume Grass	<i>Erianthus ravennae</i>
Hakone Grass	<i>Hakenochloa</i> varieties
Japanese Blood Grass	<i>Imperata</i> 'Red Baron'
Red Silver Grass	<i>Miscanthus sin.</i> <i>purpureus</i>
Eulalie	<i>Miscanthus</i> varieties
Tall Purple Moor Grass	<i>Molinia</i> varieties
Switch Grass	<i>Panicum</i> varieties
Cord Grass	<i>Spartina</i> varieties
Frost Grass	<i>Spodiopogon sibiricus</i>
Japanese Themeda	<i>Themeda triandra japonica</i>

WOODLAND SETTINGS

Sedge	<i>Carex</i> varieties
Northern Sea Oats	<i>Chasmanthium latifolium</i>
Tufted Hair Grass	<i>Deschampsia</i> varieties
Hakone Grass	<i>Hakenochloa macra</i>
Golden Hakone Grass	<i>H. m. aureola</i>
Bottlebrush Grass	<i>Hystrix patula</i>
Lily Turf	<i>Liriope</i> varieties
Woodrush	<i>Luzula</i> varieties
Bowle's Golden Grass	<i>Millium effusum aureum</i>

ROCK GARDEN & BORDER EDGING

Tuberous Oat Grass	<i>Arrhenatherum</i>
Mosquito Grass	<i>Bouteloua gracilis</i>
Quaking Grass	<i>Briza media</i>
Buchanan's Sedge	<i>Carex buchananii</i>
Dwarf Variegated Sedge	<i>C. conica</i>
Variegated Orchard Grass	<i>Dactylis glomerata variegata</i>
Fescue	<i>Festuca</i>
Blue Oat Grass	<i>Helictotrichon</i>
Variegated Velvet Grass	<i>Holcus lanatus albo-variegatus</i>
Japanese Blood Grass	<i>Imperata</i> 'Red Baron'
June Grass	<i>Koeleria glauca</i>
Variegated Moor Grass	<i>Molinia caerulea variegata</i>
Blue Moor Grass	<i>Sesleria caerulea</i>

PERENNIAL FLOWER BORDER - Medium Size For Mid Border

Mosquito Grass	<i>Bouteloua gracilis</i>
Buchanan's Sedge	<i>Carex buchananii</i>
Northern Sea Oats	<i>Chasmanthium latifolium</i>
Tufted Hair Grass	<i>Deschampsia</i> varieties
Blue Oat Grass	<i>Helictotrichon</i>
Variegated Moor Grass	<i>Molinia caerulea variegata</i>
Fountain Grass	<i>Pennisetum</i> varieties
Feather Grass	<i>Stipa capillata</i>

Taller For Back Row

Feather Reed Grass	<i>Calamagrostis acutiflora</i>
Fall Reed Grass	<i>C. brachytricha</i>
Eulalie	<i>Miscanthus</i> cultivars
Tall Purple Moor Grass	<i>Molinia</i> cultivars
Switch Grass	<i>Panicum</i> varieties

FEATHER REED GRASS - *Calamagrostis*

Grown for its overall appearance; slender, upright habit of growth. Tolerant of a wide variety of growing conditions, flowers are in dense panicles that spread open with age and persist into winter.

FEATHER REED GRASS - *Calamagrostis*

'Karl Foerster' and 'Strictus' (125 cm) are suitable for small gardens and have pinkish flower heads in late June turning to tan. The narrow dried flowers mass effectively giving special interest all summer. The variety 'Overdam' is smaller with grey leaves striped white or pink.

FALL REED GRASS – *Calamagrostis var. brachytricha*

An upright neat grass. Beautiful glistening flower heads in September-October. Full Sun.

TUFTED HAIR GRASS - *Deschampsia*

The various cultivars of *Deschampsia* may at first seem rather similar but each has its own special colour difference at flowering time. This can be best appreciated when two or three types are grouped together in the garden. They prefer moist soil in sun or partial shade and are good plants for areas getting only part-day sun.

'Bronzeschleier', 'Goldgehaenge', 'Schottland', and 'Tautreger' (60 cm) are mound forming evergreen perennial grasses with dark green foliage. Flowers appear in late summer. Dries well for winter arrangements.

EULALIE - *Miscanthus*

In Humber Nurseries' remarkable collection of ornamental grasses, our large selection of *Miscanthus* varieties is particularly notable. They are upright clump-forming plants, all with showy plumes that are a delight in the summer and fall garden. They have all proved to be very hardy and can stand up even under snow and ice, adding interest to the winter scene. They are disease & pest free and tolerant of many soil conditions, but best in moist soil in full sun. In the descriptive listing that follows, you will find a number of dwarf varieties suitable to smaller gardens and then a range of heights up to the *Miscanthus floridulus* that is the tallest. The colours of the showy flower heads can vary from whitish-silver to gold and to a chocolate-red, all eventually drying to a fluffy tan. All *Miscanthus* should be cut back in early spring.

CHINESE/JAPANESE SILVER GRASS

Miscanthus Sinensis Cultivars

Variously known as Chinese or Japanese Silver Grass, each cultivar has unique habit, flower colour and bloom time. Some have variegated foliage. Choose from:

Arabesque, Autumn Light, Berlin, Condensatus, Goliath, Gracillimus, Graziella, Huron Sunrise, Huron Sunset, Kliene Fontaine, Malepartus, Morning Light, Nippon, November Sunset, Positano, Puenktchen, Rolande, Rotsilber, Sarabande, Silver Feather, Silberspinne, Undine, Yaku Jima and many more.

Miscanthus sinensis variegatus has green and white striped foliage. Porcupine Grass and Zebra Grass are cross banded with yellow stripes.

SEDGE - *Carex*

Differing botanically from true grasses, sedges provide us with wide choice of foliage colour and texture. Particularly valuable for growing in shade or in moist areas and mostly evergreen. Enjoys moist soil in sun or shade.

SWITCH GRASS - *Panicum virgatum* (1 – 2 m)

Clump-forming upright plants with diffuse, fine-textured panicles of flowers. The variety 'rubrum' shows red in the foliage in mid-summer and other cultivars become a rich red in the fall. The foliage turns yellow in winter but it can be left standing to good effect. They are tolerant of almost any soil, from dry, sandy soil to heavy clay or wet soil. The height can vary considerably depending on how moist the soil is – only about 1 m in dry soil and 2 m when moist. An excellent variety at only one metre is 'RUBRUM', which goes red as early as July. Other popular varieties are 'Rostralbusch', 'Warrior', 'Squaw' and 'Heavy Metal'.

FOUNTAIN GRASS - *Pennisetum*

These mostly mid-sized clump-forming grasses are valued for their showy foxtail-like plumes. They vary greatly in their hardiness, from very hardy to very tender. Perhaps the most handsome is Purple Fountain Grass with striking red foliage and large red flower plumes. Unfortunately, this is a very tender variety and cannot even take frost. It needs to be lifted and potted-up before the first frost and can be wintered as a house plant in a sunny location. Do not cut back severely but leave at least 15 cm of stem.

HARDY FOUNTAIN GRASS

Pennisetum alopecuroides and the cultivars 'Cassian', 'Hamelin', and 'Moudry'.

TENDER FOUNTAIN GRASS

Pennisetum setaceum rubrum and 'Burgundy Giant', *P. ruepelli* and *P. villosum*. These tender varieties must be lifted in the fall and wintered indoors.

FESCUE - *Festuca*

Fescue are evergreen clump-forming grasses, and are excellent as a groundcover, border edging or in the rock garden. They vary considerably in colour and texture. The bluest colour is found in **Blue Finch** and **Elijah Blue**. They are best in full sun in well-drained soil and should be cut back in March before new growth begins.

BLUE FESCUE - *Festuca cinerea* 'Elijah Blue' (15 to 30 cm)

A very popular metallic blue grass. Good in borders or rock gardens. Evergreen clumps of blue-silver foliage. Also 'Blaufuch's' and 'Sea Urchin'. Sun, partial shade.

LILY TURF - *Liriope* (30 cm).

Many texts that give hardiness ratings suggest that Lily Turf is not hardy enough for our area. We can only say that we have grown them successfully over many years at our location in Brampton and have suffered no losses. Their August-October flowers in shades of lavender, purple and pure white make them particularly valuable. They can be grown in sun or shade. Even in deep shade the flowering is not diminished. The foliage is totally evergreen which can contribute much to the winter landscape. The old leaves should be removed in spring before new growth appears.

PURPLE MOOR GRASS - *Molinia*

Molinia varieties are available in many heights but even the tallest have a clean see through look as the foliage is mostly at the base of the stems. They move gracefully in the wind and the seeds are attractive to birds. The rich green summer colour changes to an orange-amber in the fall. The flower stalk does not stand through the winter but begin to break off near the ground in late November. They should then be cut back to about 10 cm. Best in full sun but can take partial shade.

Variegated *Molinia* forms a neat arching clump of green and gold striped leaves and golden flower stems. Small upright varieties to combine with perennials are – 'Heidebraut', 'Moorhexe', and 'Strahlenquelle'.

The tall Purple Moor Grasses have a see-through look as all the leaves are in a basal clump. 'Altissima', 'Karl Foerster', 'Skyracer' and 'Windspiel'. The smaller *Molinia* remain standing in winter, the taller variants do not.

MONDO GRASS - *Ophiopogon*

Grass-like member of the lily family. Partial shade to shade in moist soil. The Dwarf Mondo, Silver Mondo and Black Mondo can take full sun if in moist soil.

HUMBER NURSERIES LTD.

Ontario's Largest Garden Centre

8386 Hwy 50, Brampton, Ontario L6T 0A5

Ph: 416.798.8733 (TREE) Ph: 905.794.0555 Fax: 905.794.1311

www.humburnurseries.com humber@gardencentre.com

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