

Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment

Ornamental Grasses



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CEA for Ag and Natural Resources

Natural History of Grasses

- Relative newbie on the plant stage
 - Wind Pollinated
 - Basal Meristem
 - C4 photosynthesis

Grasses in the Garden

- Texture and movement
- Seasonal interest
- Low-maintenance
- Good companion plant
- Ecological benefits

Prairie Dropseed

- *Sporobolus heteropolis*
- Graceful clumps
- Seedheads are fragrant
- Very slow to establish



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Switchgrass

- *Panicum spp.*
- Drought/Wet tolerant
- Variety of colors- red/blue/purple
- ‘Northwind’
 - Great vertical accent
 - Backdrop for many perennials



Little Bluestem

- *Schizachyrium scoparium*
- Many varieties
- Great color and size
- Very quick to flop
- ‘Standing Ovation’



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Big Bluestem

- *Andropogon gerardii*
- Attractive seedheads
- Tolerant of moist soils
- Varieties get 5-6 ft. tall



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Photo courtesy of Intrinsic Perennial Gardens

Pink Muhly Grass

- *Muhlenbergia capillaris*
- Avoid wet soils
- Plant in early summer
- Great for dry soils, steep banks
- Amazing fall color



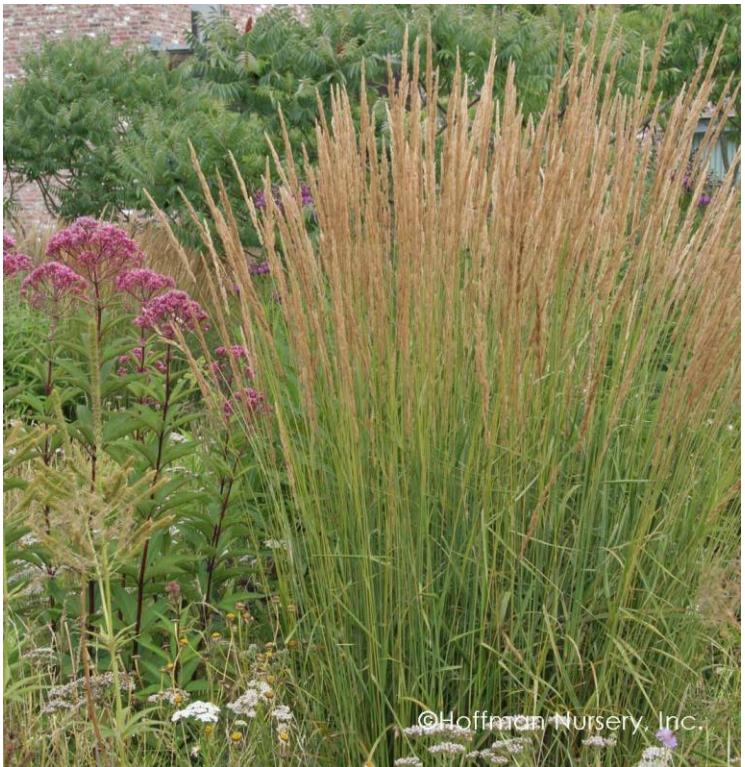
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Karl Forster Reed Grass

- *Calamagrostis x acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster'
- 2001 Perennial Plant of the Year
- 2ft clumps
- Very adaptable and reliable



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Maintenance

- Cut Back
- Division





What to Avoid?

- Planting too late
- Heavy seeders
 - River oats
 - Chinese silver grass
- Rapid rhizomes
 - Japanese blood grass
 - Running Bamboo

*Special thanks to Hoffman Nurseries for
use of the pictures.*



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