



PERENNIALS
AND
GROUNDCOVERS
GARDENING
SERIES



www.windmillgarden.com

16009 60th Street East, Sumner, WA 98390
(253) 863-5843



Growing with Grasses

Grasses are a low maintenance way to add movement, winter interest, and architecture to your garden. With an abundant selection of grasses there are varieties to fit almost any location. **Most** do well in **full sun** with a few exceptions. Those exceptions show tolerances to other conditions, perhaps by sacrificing vigorous growth or a profusion of bloom. They also afford us an opportunity to explore more options, so give grasses a try.

MAINTENANCE: Cut back to 4 inches yearly to make way for new growth. Short, less densely crowned grasses, like Japanese Forest Grass, can be managed with hand pruners or by mowing.

SKIP THE FERTILIZER: Highly fertile soils will result in lush growth which may result in vigorous, floppy growth.

KEEP THEM SHAPELY: Divide every 5-7 years. Schedule the task before the new leaves appear. If you miss that window, you can cut back actively growing grasses by a third before dividing and transplanting. Wash the soil off of the healthy division and replant immediately.

COOL SEASON: These grasses grow in early spring and continue growing while the temperatures are cool and it rains. When the weather gets hot, the grasses go dormant and start to "brown out". They revitalize when the temps cool down again. These are best planted in the early spring or late summer/early fall.

WARM SEASON: These focus their energy on establishing a good root system the 1st and 2nd year, then grow strongly the 2nd and 3rd year. They tend to stay low during the cooler parts of the spring/summer and wait until the heat of summer to put on any height. They are best planted in the late spring.

CLUMPERS VS. RUNNERS: The habit of the grass will dictate its placement. Runners spread by rhizome or stolons and make good ground covers, but they can sometimes take over. Clumpers are much more well behaved and tend to stay where they are planted.

SHADE TOLERANT

COOL SEASON - CLUMPERS

Calamagrostis x acutiflora 'Karl Foerster' (Feather Reed Grass)
Deschampsia cespitosa (and all cultivars) (Tufted Hair Grass)
Molinia caerulea (and all cultivars) (Purple Moor Grass)
Helictotrichon sempervirens (Blue Oat Grass)

COOL SEASON - RUNNERS

Alopecurus pratensis 'Variegatus' (Variegated Foxtail Grass)
Phalaris arundinacea (and all cultivars) (Reed Canary Grass)

SHADE TOLERANT

WARM SEASON - CLUMPERS

Chasmanthium latifolium (North American Wild Oats)
Hakonechloa macra (and all cultivars) (Japanese Forest Grass)
Pennisetum alopecuroides 'Moudry' & P. orientale (Fountain Grass)

WARM SEASON - RUNNERS

Imperata cylindrical (Japanese Blood Grass)

NON-GRASSES FOR SHADE

Diarrhena Americana (American Beak Grain) - Runner
Liriope muscari (Lily Grass)
Ophiopogon japonicas (Mondo Grass)
Sasaella ramosa (MidAtlantic Bamboo) - Runner
Tradescantia (Spiderwort)

MOISTURE TOLERANT

COOL SEASON - CLUMPERS

Molinia caerulea (Purple Moor Grass)
Bromis inermis (Bunch Grass)

COOL SEASON - RUNNERS

Phalaris arundinacea (Reed Canary Grass)

WARM SEASON - CLUMPERS

Miscanthus sinensis (most cultivars) (Eulalia)
Panicum virgatum (Switch Grass)

WARM SEASON - RUNNERS

Imperata cylindrical (Japanese Blood Grass)

NON-GRASSES FOR MOISTURE

Acorus gramineus (and cultivars) (Sweet Flag) - clumper
Carex (almost all) (Sedge) - clumper
Tradescantia (Spiderwort) - loose clumper
Libertia ixioides (New Zealand Iris) - clumper
Juncus effusus (Rush)

DROUGHT TOLERANT

COOL SEASON - CLUMPERS

Calamagrostis x acutiflora 'Karl Foerster' (Feather Reed Grass)
Festuca glauca (Blue Fescue)
Helictotrichon sempervirens (Blue Oat Grass)

WARM SEASON - CLUMPERS

Andropogon gerardii (Big Bluestem) & A. ternarius (Splitbeard Bluestem)
Miscanthus sinensis (Maiden Grass)
Panicum virgatum (and all cultivars) (Switch Grass)
Schizachyrium scoparium (Little Bluestem)
Sporobolus heterolepis (Prairie Drop Seed)
Nasella tenuissima (Mexican Feather Grass) aka: Stipa

WARM SEASON - RUNNERS

Imperata cylindrical (Japanese Blood Grass)

NON-GRASSES FOR DRY

Phormium colensoi & P. tenax (New Zealand Flax) - clumper