

Grasses and Grasslike Plants at Suncrest Nurseries, Inc.



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From the moment of its integration with Wintergreen Nursery in 1991, Suncrest has worked with a large collection of grasses and grasslike plants. This collection has grown over the years to about 175 species and cultivars in early 2010, emphasizing native species and cultivars of California and the West. In spring of 2010, we purchased the plant collection of our old friend and California's Grass Guru, John Greenlee, launching a new chapter in our efforts with these beautiful and interesting perennials. John has been a leading missionary for the incorporation of naturalistic meadows into gardens and commercial landscapes of all sizes. In 2009 he completed and published *The American Meadow Garden*, which has been a national bestseller among the horticultural community. We highly recommend that you purchase and read this important work, both as a source of inspiration in your own garden and as a guide to new plant lines in the nursery.

We will leave it to John to describe the meadow concept in detail. However, its general outline is that of a welcome open space in the garden, offering a diverse assortment of grasses and grasslike plants, together with other sun-loving, mostly smaller perennials and bulbs. Grasses also have other roles to play. Used *en masse*, the tidier and more drought-tolerant species can provide a much more interesting and water-conserving alternative to the traditional lawn. The sturdier grasses are fine ground covers for banks, knitting and holding the soil. Taller grasses, sedges and rushes can play a role in borders. Those with particularly beautiful structure can even serve alone or in small clusters in the manner of shrubs, for bold display. There are also many shade-tolerant, and a few truly shade-loving, species that lend pleasing variety to shady nooks, making only modest demands on the gardener. The possibilities are limited only by the gardener's imagination.

Culturally, these plants are an extremely diverse lot, reflecting their natural origins, from the moist forests to the open desert and from coastal bluffs to our highest mountain summits. However, even those from extreme environments often prove to be surprisingly adaptable (some particularly good examples are Indian rice grass, *Achnatherum hymenoides*, and several high-elevation species of *Carex*). They are preponderantly sun-loving plants, but even many of these tolerate light to moderate shading, especially in hot-summer regions. Most of the true grasses, sedges and rushes have amazingly strong and intricate root systems that both aid in their rapid establishment and give them a valuable role in erosion control. Many mountain and desert species need well drained soil to thrive, though some are more broadly adaptable. Species from other settings are much less particular. Few are fussy about nutrition, and many maintain good appearance in soils of widely varying pH and salt levels (the forest dwellers, by and large, are major exceptions to this rule). Watering regimes are one area in which it is wise to know something about the species you're working with. While only the larger denizens of streamsides, marshes and seeps actually *use* large amounts of water, there are others, like several New Zealand sedges, that distinctly dislike drying out. However, many other species are more drought-tolerant than their native haunts would suggest, and a large assortment of Western natives are as tough as dryland shrubs. For ultimate hardiness, it is wise to consult estimates based on real-life experience, such as those given below. Very few of the species we offer require any protection in most California gardens, and many thrive in colder winters than you are ever likely to see here.

The following is a roster of most of the grasses and grasslike plants currently grown at Suncrest, including our new acquisitions from John Greenlee. Each entry includes commentary on general ornamental features, uses, and cultural preferences and tolerances. We are indebted to John for many of the entries.

Achnatherum hymenoides

Indian rice grass

Cool season grass covers low fine textured leaves with profuse clusters of ornamental flowers in spring. Seeds were traditionally harvested for food in the arid west.

Grass

Native to California and the West

18-24"

Best in sun

Well drained soil

Occasional to little watering

Hardy to 0 deg. F.

Space 18"-2'

Useful on dry banks; summer watering can promote decline.

Acorus gramineus 'Licorice'

Sweet flag

Soft clumping evergreen foliage emits the scent of licorice when crushed or stepped on. Glossy green pointed leaves are a beautiful addition to shady, moist garden settings.

Grass-like perennial

Native to China and Japan

6-12"

Full sun to light shade

Most soils as long as moisture is present

Regular to moderate water, will grow in water

Hardy to 0 degrees F.

Space 6-12" on center

Suitable for ponds and bogs. Plant along pathway edges where scent will be released. Tolerates light traffic, and can be mixed with dwarf sedges like *Carex remota*, *Carex texensis*, or *Carex pansa* to create sweetly scented walkways.

Acorus gramineus 'Ogon'

Sweet flag

Brilliant butter yellow foliage emits a sweet scent when leaves are crushed or stepped on. Excellent for lighting up dark areas of the garden.

Grass-like perennial

Native to China and Japan

6-12"

Full sun to light shade

Most soils as long as moisture is present

Regular to moderate water, will grow in water

Hardy to 0 degrees F.

Space 6-12" on center

Suitable for ponds and bogs. Plant along pathway edges where scent will be released. Tolerates light traffic, and can be mixed with dwarf sedges like *Carex remota*, *Carex texensis*, or *Carex pansa* to create sweetly scented walkways.

Acorus gramineus 'Pusillus'

Dwarf sweet flag

A miniature version of the delightfully scented sweet flag with glossy bright green foliage which emits a sweet scent when leaves are crushed or stepped on.

Grass-like perennial

Native to China and Japan

6-12"

Full sun to light shade

Most soils as long as moisture is present

Regular to moderate water, will grow in water

Hardy to 0 degrees F.

Space 6-12" on center

Suitable for ponds and bogs. Plant along pathway edges where scent will be released. Tolerates light traffic, and can be mixed with dwarf sedges like *Carex remota*, *Carex texensis*, or *Carex pansa* to create sweetly scented walkways.

Acorus gramineus 'Variegatus'

Sweet flag

Leaves are striped with a creamy variegation that creates a delightful accent in moist shady garden settings. The foliage emits a sweet scent when leaves are crushed or stepped on.

Grass-like perennial

Native to China and Japan

6-12"

Full sun to light shade

Most soils as long as moisture is present

Regular to moderate water, will grow in water

Hardy to 0 degrees F.

Space 6-12" on center

Suitable for ponds and bogs. Plant along pathway edges where scent will be released. Tolerates light traffic, and can be mixed with dwarf sedges like *Carex remota*, *Carex texensis*, or *Carex pansa* to create sweetly scented walkways.

Ampelodesmos mauritanicus

Vine reed

Tall clumping evergreen grass has bright, sharp-edged glossy green leaves that can make a 6' high and wide clump. Showy golden flowers then arch 6-8' above the foliage. This tall background grass is moderately slow growing and will be much smaller in dry situations. Tolerates salt spray and hot desert conditions. Foliage was historically used to tie grapevines in Spanish vineyards.

Grass

Native to Mediterranean region

Clumps to 4-6', flowers to 8-12'

Sun to light shade

Most soils

Moderate to little watering

Hardy to 15 deg. F. or less

Space 6-8'

Useful as an accent for the large landscape. It can be used as a substitute for pampas grass as it is not invasive.

Anemanthele lessoniana (Stipa arundinacea)

New Zealand wind grass

Narrow dark olive green leaves arch outward from a dense base and droop gracefully almost to the ground. Evergreen and clumping, leaves develop more orange tones with drought or sun. Late spring flowers are airy and not particularly showy.

Grass

Native to New Zealand

2' high

Sun to part shade

Well drained soil

Regular to moderate watering

Hardy to 10 deg. F.

Space 2' or more

Best in cool sun or part shade. Not at its best in hot areas.

Aristida purpurea

Purple three-awn

Narrow green leaves on a densely tufted grass are complemented by red purple flushed flower spikes in spring.

Pendant flowers dry to an attractive tan color. This warm season grass is well adapted to dry gardens.

Grass

Native to California and the West

1-2' high

Sun

Well-drained soil

Moderate to occasional watering

Hardy to 0 degrees F.

Space 2' or more

Suited to dry gardens and meadows, as an accent or in drifts.

Baumea rubiginosa 'Variegata'

Striped twig rush

Strictly vertical growing sedge relative has medium green foliage accented by thin gold linear variegation, creating a distinctive effect as the colony of erect stems expand. Evergreen, and softer to the touch than it appears.

Sedge

Native to New Zealand

18-30" (taller in moist settings)

Sun to part shade

Wide variety of soils

Regular to moderate watering, tolerates wet soils and will grow in water

Hardy to 18 degrees F.

Space 18-24" on center

Good in groups or singular as an accent. Excellent in containers and water gardens. Subtle gold variegation will light up a shady setting.

Bothriochloa barbinodis

Cane bluestem

Slender stems rise over relaxed upright yellow green clumps and display silvery soft flowers that mature to striking translucent tufts. Site plants where flowers will be backlit for best effect. Evergreen in moderately watered situations, but will take drought.

Grass

Native to California and the West

Leaves to 2', flowers to 4'

Full sun to part shade

Most soils

Moderate to little watering

Hardy to 0 deg. F.

Space 12-18" on center

Clumping grass is best seen in informal gardens and meadows. It will tolerate hot interior gardens as well as coastal conditions. Useful for naturalizing, combines well with poppies and lupines.

Bouteloua curtipendula

Side-oats grama

Very adaptable, clumping warm season grass sends up thin flower stems in late spring and summer. Delicate grain-like flowers dangle from one side of the flower stems, starting purplish and fading to tan. Leaves and flower stems develop bronze and purple shades in fall and winter.

Grass

Native to California, much of North America, and some of South America

Lvs to 6-12", fl. stems to 1-3'

Best in full sun, can take light shade

Most soils

Moderate to little watering

Hardy to 0 degrees F.

Space 12-18" on center

Useful in drifts in meadows, or more singly in mixed plantings.

Bouteloua gracilis

Blue grama

Clumping low grass is often grown as a natural lawn in dry regions. Growth is in the warmer months, though dormancy can be short in mild areas. Charming dark grey flowers held horizontally in mid-summer prompt an alternate common name of mosquito flower.

Grass

Native to California and much of the U.S.

Lvs. 3-5" high

Best in full sun, can take light shade

Somewhat well-drained soil

Moderate to little watering

Hardy to 0 deg. F.

Space 4-6" for natural lawn, 6-12" for mixed plantings

Useful as a natural lawn, can be mowed to 3 inches or less. Since it is clumping, planting must be dense, or

interplanting with a rhizomatous grass can be effective.

Brachypodium retusum (Bromus retusum)

Mediterranean false brome

Creeping evergreen grass for meadows. Fine textured blue-green foliage forms dense colonies and is mowable if desired. Drought tolerant once established.

Grass

Native to southern Europe

12-18"

Sun or light shade

Regular to moderate watering

Tolerates a wide range of soils, from sand to clay

Hardy to 10 degrees F.

Space 18-24" on center

Good filler grass in meadows and on slopes. Tolerates dry shade when established. Good groundcover in orchards and under trees.

Briza media

Rattlesnake grass, quaking grass

Clumping, medium green foliage is topped by showy flowers that resemble a rattlesnake's tail, emerging iridescent green and drying to golden tan. This beautiful small-scale flowering accent for borders or meadows is evergreen, a cool season grower, and one of the first grasses to bloom in the spring. Prune foliage and flowers in late June to keep tidy throughout the summer and fall.

Grass

Native to Europe

18" (foliage 6-12", flower stems to 18")

Full sun to light shade

Most soils

Regular to moderate watering

Hardy to 0 degrees F.

Space 12-18"

Excellent flowering accent for the spring border; also good in masses.

Bromus benekenii

The Denver brome

Clumping bright green soft-foliaged grass is a dependable grower in a wide variety of conditions including dry shade with tree root competition. Leaves are covered with soft hairs that create special effects on dewy and frosty mornings. Slender see-through flowers emerge in spring and are tidy on the plant throughout most of the year. Evergreen in even the coldest of climates. Tolerates coastal conditions. Lighter green foliage in full sun.

Grass

Native to Southern Europe

8-16"

Full sun to shade

Most soil

Moderate water, drought tolerant once established

Hardy to below 0 degrees F.

Space 12-18" on center

Good in groups, excellent component of shady meadows. Naturalizes.

Calamagrostis acutiflora 'Avalanche'

Feather reed grass

Upright clumps reach 4' or more with fluffy, pinkish flower spikes displayed in summer. Green edged leaves have white centers. Plants grow during the cool season and do best with some winter chill.

Semi-evergreen grass

Selection of Eurasian hybrid

3-4' high & wide

Full sun
Well-drained soil
Moderate watering
Hardy to 0 degrees F. or less

Use in borders, flower gardens, mixed plantings, as background, or for screening.

Calamagrostis acutiflora 'Karl Foerster'

Feather reed grass

Popular natural hybrid produces tight clumps of deep green leaves. Erect flower stems can rise to 6' and carry delicate plumes that progress from purplish pink to light tan, and last as a vertical accent for months.

Grass
Hybrid of Eurasian species
Clumps to 2-3', fl. stems to 4-6'
Sun to light shade
Most soils
Regular to moderate watering
Hardy to 0 degrees F.
Space 2-3'

Use in drifts or as an accent in the meadow garden; can be almost evergreen in mild regions. Not at its best in hot, humid climates.

Calamagrostis foliosa

Mendocino reed grass

Tidy clumps of dark bluish grey leaves may develop purplish highlights in winter. Spring flowers on arching stems are pinkish and dry to an attractive tan color. Cool season grass from coastal habitats can tolerate some salt spray.

Grass
Native to California
12"+ clumps
Sun to light shade
Well-drained soil
Moderate to occasional watering
Hardy to 10 degrees F.
Space 16" or more

Use in drifts or as single specimen; this grass keeps neat form and needs little maintenance.

Carex albolutescens

Florida sedge

Evergreen sedge forms mounding clumps of bright glossy green pleated leaves. Good for tropical effects. Can be massed for use as a ground cover.

Sedge
Native to southern U.S.
8-16"
Sun to shade
Tolerates a wide range of soils
Regular to moderate watering
Hardy to 18 degrees F.
Space 12-18" on center

Naturalizes in moist settings. Tolerates light traffic.

Carex albula 'Frosted Curls'

New Zealand hair sedge

Fine-textured clumps of evergreen, weeping foliage look great planted singly or as an undulating mass. Flowers insignificant. Nice contrast with flowers.

Sedge
Native to New Zealand
10-12", but lays flat against ground

Sun or light shade
Most soils
Regular to moderate watering
Hardy to 10 degrees F. or less
Space 12-18" on center

Use on banks, in mixed plantings, in flower or shade gardens. Great in containers.

Carex blanda

Creek sedge

Mounding clumps of bright, lustrous green leaves characterize this sedge from floodplain soils throughout the eastern U.S. and Canada. Use in a mass as a ground cover. Evergreen.

Sedge
Native to eastern North America
8-14" high
Sun or shade
Tolerates a wide range of soils
Regular to moderate watering
Hardy to 0 degrees F.
Space 12-18" on center

Use as filler in tropical or shady gardens. Good with ferns. Occasional mowing keeps it lower.

Carex brunnea (elegantissima) 'Variegata'

Golden-edged sedge

Clumping upright evergreen sedge. Fine textured glossy olive green leaves have a beautiful cream variegation that give the leaves delicate highlights.

Sedge
Native to China and east Asia
12-16"
Sun to light shade
Best in well-drained soil
Regular to moderate watering
Hardy to 15 degrees F. or less
Space 12-18" on center

Good in groups and drifts. Excellent accent in lightly shaded gardens.

Carex buchananii

Tall copper sedge

Uniquely coppery brown foliage is held in narrow upright clumps to two feet high.

Sedge
Native to New Zealand
18-24"
Sun to light shade
Best in well-drained soil
Regular to moderate water
Hardy to 0 degrees F.
Space 2' or more on center

Good in groups and masses. Excellent in containers and as an accent with other interesting foliated plants – blends well with reds and purples. One of the shorter-lived NZ sedges, it is dependable for 2-3 seasons in most settings.

Carex cherokeensis

Cherokee sedge

Clumping evergreen sedge with bright yellow glossy foliage, topped by arching catkin- like seedheads.

Sedge
Native to southeastern U.S.
12-18"
Sun to shade

Tolerates a wide range of soils, from sand to clay
Regular to moderate watering
Hardy to 0 degrees F.
Space 18-24" on center

Use for groundcover in meadows and shady situations. Good in groups and massed with ferns.

Carex dolichostachya 'Kaga Nishiki'

Gold fountains sedge

Beautiful clumping golden variegated sedge makes beautiful arching mounds of bright foliage 8-12" high. Yellow linear striped variegation adds subtle golden accents and can brighten up dark corners of the garden. Needs more moisture in full sun, best with afternoon shade in hot climates.

Sedge

Native to Japan and China

8-12"

Sun to shade

Best in well-drained, fertile soil

Regular to moderate watering

Hardy to 0 degrees F.

Space 12-18" on center

Good in groups or as an accent. Good filler. Good in pots and containers.

Carex divulsa

Berkeley sedge

This dark green clumping sedge is one of the most versatile groundcover sedges for California gardens. A true workhorse, it will adapt to a wide variety of conditions, remaining evergreen in all but the coldest climates. This has been offered as *C. tumulicola*.

Sedge

Native to Europe

12-18" high and wide

Full sun to shade

Tolerates a wide range of soils, from sand to clay

Regular to moderate watering

Hardy to 0 degrees F.

Space 12-18" on center

Tolerates traffic, tree roots, and salt spray. Great in drifts as a groundcover.

Carex elata 'Bowles' Golden'

Golden tufted sedge

Vivid golden sedge forms dense, somewhat erect clumps; bright yellow leaves with green center are most brilliant in spring, fading in late summer. Black flowers in summer. Deciduous in winter.

Sedge

Native to Europe

To 2' high

Sun or light shade

Well-drained soil

Regular to moderate watering

Hardy to 0 degrees F. or less

Space 18"-2' or more

Use for vivid color in borders, shade gardens, near ponds.

Carex flacca (Carex glauca)

Grey sedge

Silvery grey evergreen creeping sedge forms dense colonies in smaller areas. Excellent between pavers and for edging, it can also be mowed to keep it lawn-like. Tolerates moist soils.

Sedge

Native to Europe
6-12" high
Sun to shade
Tolerates a wide range of soils, from sand to clay
Regular to moderate watering
Hardy to 0 degrees F.
Space 6-12" on center

Good as filler and edging, and tolerates occasional traffic. Needs plenty of moisture in hot inland areas.

Carex morrowii 'Ice Dance'

This evergreen sedge with creamy white leaf margins lightens up shady gardens. Handsome, subtly variegated leaves are topped with showy chocolate seedheads in spring. Slowly spreading clumps prove useful in many garden settings.

Sedge
Native to Japan
12" high and wide
Needs well-drained soil
Regular to moderate watering
Cool sun or light shade
Hardy to 0 degrees F.
Space 18" on center

Use as accent plant or in containers. Works in drifts, and combines well with ferns.

Carex muskingumensis 'Oehme'

Variegated palm sedge

This beautiful woodland sedge is native to a large portion of the northern and central U.S. Subtle creamy-white variegation gives glossy olive green foliage a beautiful highlight. Tolerates considerable drought in the shade, and will grow in damp or wet soils. Winter deciduous, and can develop good fall color.

Sedge
Native to north central North America
12-20" high, spreading
Sun to light shade
Most soils
Regular to moderate watering
Hardy to 0 degrees F. or less
Space 12-24" on center

Use as adaptable groundcover in large scale gardens. Combines well with ferns in damp shade.

Carex oshimensis 'Evergold'

Evergold sedge

Glossy leaves are creamy yellow, with green edges; clumps drape gracefully as they mature. Adaptable to many situations, but avoid extreme heat.

Evergreen sedge
Native to Japan
12-16"
Sun or light shade
Most soils
Moderate watering
Hardy to 0 degrees F. or less

Space 18-30" or more

Useful as a groundcover, accent, container plant or around perennials.

Carex pansa

California meadow sedge

A creeping evergreen sedge with dark green lustrous foliage, this is one of the most popular and well-tested grasses for meadows and natural lawns. Mowable and forgiving of traffic, it creates a fine native lawn with a proven track record throughout California from the coast to inland valleys. Extremely drought tolerant once established. Trim regularly to help it to fill in faster.

Sedge

Native to California

6-12" (can be mowed lower)

Sun or light shade

Tolerates a wide variety of soils from sand to clay

Regular to moderate watering

Hardy to 10 degrees F. or less

Space 6-18" on center (closer spacing will fill in faster)

Tolerates first exposure sea coast. Works well mixed with other groundcover sedges, and is often used as a pathway through taller meadow grasses.

Carex pendula

Drooping sedge

Large clumping evergreen sedge with beautiful arching pendulous flowers that are showy on the plant for much of the year. Tough, versatile, and evergreen in all but the coldest of climates. This moisture lover will grow in water, making a striking accent at pond's edge.

Sedge

Native to Europe

3 - 4'

Full sun to shade

Most soil, as long as moisture is available

Regular to moderate watering

Hardy to 0 degrees F.

Space 18"-3' on center

A great background sedge for shady gardens. Combine with ferns. Excellent in ponds and bogs.

Carex perdentata

Hill country sedge

Glossy evergreen clumping foliage is a bright yellow green topped by tan seedheads in the spring. Makes a fine pathway in shady gardens, where the bright foliage illuminates moonlight walks.

Sedge

Native to southwest U.S.

8-12"

Sun to light shade

Wide variety of soils

Regular to moderate watering; drought tolerant when established

Hardy to 10 degrees F.

Space 8-16" on center

Good in groups and masses. Excellent in dry shade; combine with ferns.

Carex praegracilis

Western meadow sedge

A close cousin of the popular *Carex pansa*, western meadow sedge is found in nature up & down the state of California. This creeping evergreen sedge is one of the most popular and well-tested grasses for meadows and natural lawns. Mowable and forgiving of traffic, it creates a fine native lawn with a proven track record throughout California. Extremely drought tolerant once established. Trim regularly to help it to fill in faster.

Sedge
Native to California
6-12" (can be mowed lower)
Sun or light shade
Tolerates a wide variety of soils from sand to clay
Regular to moderate watering
Hardy to 10 degrees F. or less
Space 6-18" on center (closer spacing will fill in faster)

Tolerates first exposure sea coast. Works well mixed with other groundcover sedges, and can be used as a pathway through taller meadow grasses.

Carex radiata

Eastern wood sedge

A clumping, fine-textured sedge found at woodland edges throughout the northern and eastern U.S. Glossy foliage is medium green, with insignificant coppery seedheads in spring. It makes a wonderful groundcover for sedge meadows and natural lawns. Evergreen in most climates.

Sedge
Native to eastern U.S.
6-12"
Sun to moderate shade
Wide variety of soils
Regular to moderate watering
Hardy to 0 degrees F.
Space 12-16" on center

Good in groups and masses; combines well with ferns. Provide with regular water in hot inland conditions.

Carex remota

European meadow sedge

This rich green sedge forms fine-textured clumps of grassy foliage. It is a durable groundcover sedge for meadows. Evergreen, with bronzy winter highlights.

Sedge
Native to Europe
12-16"
Sun to moderate shade
Most soils
Regular to moderate watering
Hardy to 0 degrees F.
Space 12-18" on center

Good in groups and masses, tolerates light traffic. One of the best meadow sedges, especially in small settings.

Carex retroflexa

Texas sedge

This fine textured, medium green clumping sedge is found in nature as a groundcover under oaks. Mowable, it makes a fine shady lawn in hot southern and southwestern U.S. gardens. Adaptable to a wide variety of conditions. Tolerates traffic.

Sedge
Native to Texas
Foliage 2-4" with 4-6" wiry flower spikes in spring
Full sun to light shade
Most soils
Regular to moderate water
Hardy to 10 degrees F.
Space 6-8" on center

Trim quarterly to keep plantings dense. Combine with short flowering bulbs for colorful accents.

Carex riparia 'Variegata'

Variiegated greater pond sedge

Creeping, moisture loving sedge has pure white variegation on silvery grey green leaves. Winter dormant, it can form extensive colonies in moist soil.

Sedge

Native to Northern Europe

12-18"

Sun to light shade

Wide variety of soils as long as moisture is present

Regular to moderate watering

Hardy to below 0 degrees F.

Space 12-18" on center

Good on the water's edge, in bog gardens and containers; will also grow in water. Effective in mass plantings and as a filler.

Carex spissa

San Diego sedge

Wide blue grey leaves with firm texture create handsome erect clumps. Spring flowers are not particularly ornamental.

Clumps increase in width over time.

Evergreen sedge

Native to southern and Baja California

4-5'

Sun or light shade

Most soils

Regular to moderate watering

Hardy to 10 degrees F. or less

Space 3' or more

This sedge can also be planted in standing water. It will accept some drought, but looks best with moderate water.

Carex testacea

Orange New Zealand sedge

One of the "hummock" sedges from New Zealand that grace our gardens, this species combines dark olive green leaves with orange tips and highlights, creating a splash of bright color throughout the year. Plants make striking tufts with long trailing tips.

Sedge

Native to New Zealand

2' high

Sun to light shade

Prefers well-drained soil

Regular to moderate watering

Hardy to 10 degrees F. or less

Space 2-3' or more

Planting in sun enhances orange coloration, but probably not suited to hot, dry areas.

Carex texensis

Catlin Sedge

Clumping sedge has fine textured foliage. Leaves are topped by wiry lax seedheads in late spring that lay flat above the foliage. This mowable sedge makes a good lawn substitute and mixes well with other sedges for a shady meadow.

Combine with short flowering bulbs for colorful accents.

Sedge

Native to much of eastern U.S. from Texas to Canada

2-3" foliage, flowers 6" above foliage

Full sun to shade

Wide variety of soils

Regular to moderate water

Hardy to 0 degrees F.

Space 6" on center for lawns & pathways; space further in mixed plantings

Used in groups or massed; good as filler, for edging and between pavers. Often used for pathways through taller shade grasses. Trim quarterly to keep plantings dense. Tolerates traffic.

Carex 'The Beatles'

This semi-evergreen hybrid sedge forms dense clumps of compact dark green foliage. It is one of smallest clumping sedges, excellent for edging and between pavers and dish gardens.

Sedge

8"

Probable hybrid of European species

Sun to light shade

Well-drained soil

Regular to moderate watering

Hardy to 0 degrees F.

Space 6" on center

A little mop-headed sedge for jewel-box gardens.

Carex tumulicola—true species

Slender sedge

The real species of this northwest U.S. sedge is an inhabitant of meadows and open woodlands. Dark wiry green stems grow in slowly spreading clumps. It will be of interest to native plant enthusiasts.

Sedge

Native from California to Washington

8-14"

Sun to part shade

Most soils

Moderate to occasional watering

Hardy to 10 degrees F. or less

Space 8-12"

Use in mixed plantings, or for naturalizing.

Cyperus alternifolius--dwarf

Umbrella plant

Dark green tropical looking sedge forms dense clumps. Lustrous dark green foliage has flower bracts that resemble cocktail umbrellas. Great in pots and containers.

Sedge

Native to Africa

18-14"

Sun to light shade

Wide variety of soils

Regular to moderate watering; tolerates boggy wet soils and grows in water

Hardy to 18 degrees F.

Space 12-18"

Use for tropical accent; good in groups. Will grow in water or moist soils.

Cyperus gunnii

Flecked flat sedge

This tall sedge grows from dense clumps in seasonally moist areas. Flowers are clusters of brown balls borne near the top of the leaves. Plants are evergreen and spread by short, thick rhizomes. They can be grown in water or not, and may turn coppery in drier conditions.

Sedge

Native to western Australia

4-5' high

Sun or light shade

Most soils
Regular watering
Hardy to 25 degrees F. or less
Space 2' or more on center

Use in moist areas, beside water features, in watered meadows or in containers.

Cyperus longus

Hardy dwarf papyrus

Creeping warm-season sedge with lustrous papyrus-like foliage forms dense colonies in moist situations. Excellent for tropical effects in colder climates. Displays rich, coppery foliage in the fall before going dormant in winter.

Sedge
Native to Eurasia
2-3'
Full sun to light shade
Any moist soil
Regular to moderate watering
Hardy to 0 degrees F.
Space 12-18" on center

At its best at the water's edge; it is well adapted to fluctuating water levels.

Cyperus papyrus

Papyrus

Graceful clumping reed with distinctive "tufts" at tops of stems. Protect from wind. Needs regular water.

Reed
Native to Africa
6-10' tall
Sun or light shade
Most soils
Keep moist
Hardy to 20-25 degrees F.

Use at pool or pond side, even pot sunk in pond ok.

Danthonia californica

California oat grass

Low clumping grass has bright green leaves; long flowering stems arch out and carry little triangular flower heads at their tips. Native to meadows and forest edges, this grass appreciates some protection in hot spots. Can be mowed and will withstand some foot traffic.

Grass
Native to California and the West, also parts of South America
Lvs. to 6", fl. stems to 2'
Sun to light shade
Most soils
Occasional to little watering
Hardy to 10 degrees F. or less
Space 18" or more

Use in meadow plantings, for naturalizing in coastal regions, and on banks.

Deschampsia cespitosa 'Goldgehaenge'

Tufted hair grass

Tight tufts of bright green leaves are evergreen in most areas. Clouds of tiny golden yellow flowers are held over the leaves on slender golden stems in late spring. Not suited to hot dry areas, and best flowering happens in regions with winter chill.

Grass
Native to Northern Hemisphere
Foliage clump to 18", fl. stems to 3'
Sun to light shade
Most soils
Regular to moderate watering
Hardy to 0 degrees F. or less
Space 2' or more

Useful in mixed plantings or meadows.

Deschampsia cespitosa ssp. holciformis

Pacific hair grass

Subspecies of the cosmopolitan hair grass forms lower, bright green clumps and tighter, tannish flower clusters. Native to coastal meadows and marshes, it will need regular watering in warm areas.

Grass
Native to California and the Northwest
Lvs to 1', fl stems to 2'+
Sun to light shade
Most soils
Moderate to occasional watering
Hardy to 10 degrees F. or less
Space 2' or more

Use in meadows, mixed plantings, part shade gardens.

Distichlis spicata

Saltgrass

Creeping, colony-forming native grass is found in wetlands and marsh edges up and down the state of California, even appearing in wet meadows in the desert. This mowable, warm-season grass is deciduous in winter. Tolerates salt, first exposure seacoast, saline and alkaline conditions. Regular trimming helps it to fill in.

Grass
Native to California and the West
6-12"
Sun to light shade
Tolerates a wide variety of soil, sand to clay
Hardy to 0 degrees F.
Space 12-18" on center

Forms an extremely durable turf that spreads from creeping rhizomes. An important component for bioswales and wetland restoration.

Eleocharis acicularis

Creeping spikerush

This creeping, colony-forming rush-like sedge can be found in wet plant communities in every corner of California. Lustrous, very fine-textured foliage is a medium green that turns burnished copper in winter. Warm-season grower.

Sedge
Native to California and the West
6-12"
Sun to light shade
Any moist soil
Regular to moderate watering
Hardy to 0 degrees F.
Space 6-18" on center

A great filler for bog gardens and pond edges. Will grow in water.

Elymus elymoides—selected blue

Squirreltail grass

Tidy mountain bunchgrass with short erect stems, chalky-blue leaves, and glistening flower plumes in spring and summer, drying and lasting into fall.

Grass

Native to California and the West

12-18"

Sun or light shade

Well-drained soil

Moderate to occasional watering

Hardy to below 0 deg. F.

Space 18"-2'

Can be used in rock gardens, meadows and bank plantings.

Elymus magellanicus--upright

Magellan wheatgrass

Clumping cool-season grass has shining metallic blue leaves on fairly upright stems. From higher elevations of South America, it is well suited to cooler areas and goes dormant when summers are hot.

Grass

Native to South America

12-18"

Sun to part shade

Most soils

Regular to moderate watering

Hardy to 0 degrees F. or less

Space 2' or more

Shiny blue leaves make this a great grass for containers or mixed plantings.

Eragrostis elliottii

Florida love grass

Clumping metallic blue foliage turns amazing shades of orange and purple in fall and winter. Noticeable golden flowers emerge in early summer and add sparkle to the plant.

Grass

Native to Florida

18-24"

Sun to light shade

Prefers well-drained soil

Regular to moderate watering

Hardy to 10 degrees F. or less

Space 18-24" on center

Spectacular foliage effects, good in groups, and excellent in containers.

Festuca californica

California fescue

Neat loose clumps of evergreen leaves are bright green; late spring flower stems display small tan flowers on 4' stems. Often found on north-facing slopes, this grass benefits from protection from hot sun. Evergreen in most areas, with growth in the cool season. 'Gabilan Blues' is our seed strain with blue grey leaves.

Grass

Native to California and Oregon

24-30" clumps, flowers to 4'+'

Sun to part shade

Most soils

Moderate to little watering

Hardy to 0-10 degrees F.

Space 3-4'

Useful grass for part shade plantings; under trees or among perennials. Can be naturalized in coastal climates.

Festuca californica 'Blue Fountain'

California fescue

An elegant tall bunchgrass, clumping tightly at the base, with grey-green leaves to 1-2'. Glistening flower stems arch 3-4' in summer, displaying open sprays of large flower heads.

Grass

Selected in northern California

12-18"

Best in light shade

Well-drained soil

Moderate to occasional watering

Hardy to 0-10 deg. F.

Space 3-4'

Use it alone or in drifts under oaks, in shady nooks, and in other odd corners of the garden. An elegant container specimen. Shade it in hot-summer areas.

Festuca idahoensis 'Muse Meadow'

Idaho fescue

A beautiful fine-leaved mountain grass making dense, low clumps, from which slender stems of silvery flower spikelets erupt in summer. 'Muse Meadow' is distinguished by particularly bright blue-green leaves.

Grass

Selected in northern California

12-18"

Sun or light shade

Well-drained soil

Moderate to occasional watering

Hardy to below 0 deg. F.

Space 1-2'

Use it as a ground or bank cover, in mixed plantings, or as edging. Dislikes high summer heat.

Festuca idahoensis 'Stony Creek'

Idaho fescue

A particularly blue-leaved, blue-stemmed selection of Idaho fescue, making tight clumps of narrow 8-12" leaves. Airy flower stems rise to 2'+ in summer.

Introduced by the Regional Parks Botanic Garden at Tilden.

Grass

Selected in northern California

To 2' +

Sun or light shade

Well-drained soil

Moderate to occasional watering

Hardy to 0 deg. F.

Space 18"-2'

Use it as a ground or bank cover, in mixed plantings, or as edging. Best in coastal and mountain gardens.

Festuca idahoensis 'Warren Peak'

Idaho fescue

Fine-leaved native bunchgrass making extremely tight, low clumps. This selection has grey-green leaves and silvery, often pink-tinged flower panicles in summer. Not good in hot-summer areas.

Grass

Selected in northern California

12" high

Sun or light shade

Well-drained soil
Moderate to occasional watering
Hardy to below 0 deg. F.
Space 1-2'

Use it as a ground or bank cover, in mixed plantings, as an edging plant, even in rock gardens.

Festuca mairei

Atlas fescue

Dependable clumping evergreen foliage is just one of the reasons this is one of the most popular grasses for making meadows in California. Khaki green foliage is accented by slender flowers that are noticeable and attractive on the plant from spring into fall. This is one of the best grasses for all but the hot desert regions of California. Flowers are never messy on the plant.

Grass
Native to Morocco
2-3'
Full sun to light shade
Wide variety of soils
Regular to moderate water, drought tolerant once established
Hardy to 0 degrees F.
Space 2-3' on center

Good in groups and masses and a tidy accent in mixed plantings.

Festuca rubra 'Jughandle'

Red fescue

An unusually fine-leaved, grey-green selection of red fescue, making dense low hummocks. Graceful, slender flower stems in summer. Needs more irrigation in hot-summer areas.

Grass
Selected in northern California
12" high
Sun or light shade near the coast, best in part shade inland.
Reasonably well-drained soil
Moderate watering; somewhat drought tolerant if shaded.
Hardy to around 0 deg. F.
Space 1-2'

Use it in drifts as a lawn substitute, on banks and in mixed plantings.

Festuca rubra 'Molate'

Red fescue

Soft, spreading low mound with bright blue-green leaves, nice in broad drifts for natural meadows.

Grass
Selected in northern California
1-2' high
Sun or light shade
Most soils
Moderate watering; somewhat drought tolerant if shaded.
Hardy to 0 deg. F. or less.
Space 1-2'

Use it as a turf substitute, on banks, and for naturalizing. Not a good choice for hot-summer areas.

Festuca rubra 'Patrick's Point'

Red fescue

Bright blue-green mound, up to 1' x 2'.

Grass

Selected in northern California

12" high

Sun or light shade

Reasonably well-drained soil

Moderate to occasional watering

Hardy to below 0 deg. F.

Space 1-2'

Use it as a ground or bank cover, in mixed plantings, or as an edging plant. Not good in hot-summer areas.

Hakonechloa macra 'Albovariegata'

Hakone grass

Clumping warm season grass develops into a soft willowy mound. This selection is larger than others—to 3'—and can be more adaptable to sunny situations. Creamy white striped leaves arch out from a very dense base and stems are almost bamboo-like in texture. Delicate flowers are held at stem tips in summer.

Grass

Native to Japan

2-3' high

Cool sun to shade

Well-drained soil

Regular to moderate watering

Hardy to 0 degrees F.

Space 16-30"

Great as an accent or groundcover in shade

Hakonechloa macra 'All Gold'

Hakone grass

Lush grass can be slow to fill in, but worth the wait, developing into a soft willowy mound. Golden yellow leaves arch out from a very dense base and stems are almost bamboo-like in texture. Delicate flowers are held at stem tips in summer. Clumps slowly expand and are deciduous in winter months.

Grass

Native to Japan

12-30" high

Cool sun to shade

Well-drained soil

Regular to moderate watering

Hardy to 0 degrees F.

Space 16-30"

Great as an accent or groundcover in shade.

Hakonechloa macra 'Aureola'

Hakone grass

Lush grass for cool sun or shade develops into a soft willowy mound. Yellow and green striped leaves arch out from a very dense base and stems are almost bamboo-like in texture. This cultivar develops stronger yellow color when grown in sun, shade brings a bright limey green flush. Pinkish highlights can appear in fall. Clumps slowly expand and are deciduous in winter months.

Grass

Native to Japan

12-30" high

Cool sun to shade

Well-drained soil

Regular to moderate watering

Hardy to 0 degrees F.

Space 16-30"

Great as an accent or groundcover in shade.

Hakonechloa macra 'Emerald Glow'

Hakone grass

Bright green leaves arch out from a very dense base and stems are almost bamboo-like in texture. Delicate flowers are held at stem tips in summer. Foliage develops red highlights in fall. Clumps expand and are deciduous in winter months. Faster to fill in than most variegated cultivars.

Grass

Native to Japan

12-30" high

Cool sun to shade

Well-drained soil

Regular to moderate watering

Hardy to 0 degrees F.

Space 16-30 inches

Great as an accent or groundcover. Must have shade in hot areas.

Hakonechloa macra-taller selection

Hakone grass

Leaves arch out from a very dense base and form billowy clumps. Delicate flowers are held at stem tips in summer. Clumps slowly expand and are deciduous in winter months. Leaves combine yellow and green.

Grass

Native to Japan

12-30" high

Cool sun to shade

Well-drained soil

Regular to moderate watering

Hardy to 0 degrees F.

Space 16-30 inches

Great as an accent or groundcover in shade.

Helictotrichon sempervirens

Blue oatgrass

Cool season grass keeps silvery grey leaves all year except in the coldest climates. Light gold flowers arch over the tight foliage clump in spring. Not at its best in hot or humid areas.

Grass

Native to southern Alps, Mediterranean region

30"

Sun to part shade

Well-drained soil

Moderate to occasional watering

Hardy to 0 degrees F. or less

Space 2-3' or more

Use in drifts or singly in dry gardens and on banks.

Imperata cylindrica rubra

Japanese blood grass

Erect green leaf blades flushed red at their tips deepen and expand their vivid red coloring as the season progresses. Spreading clumps present a striking splash of color in the garden.

Grass

Native to Japan, China, Korea

12-18" high

Sun to part shade

Most soils
Regular to moderate watering
Hardy to 0 degrees F.
Space 12-24"

Grows best in areas with winter chill. Prefers fertile soil.

Juncus 'Carman's Japanese'

Carman's Japanese rush

This evergreen clumping rush was given to famous California nurseryman Ed Carman by a Japanese stonemason who planted one in every garden to bring good fortune. Showy tan flowers appear on fine-textured, bright green arching foliage.

Rush
Native to Japan
18-24"
Full sun to shade
Any moist soil
Regular to moderate watering; will grow in water
Hardy to 0 degrees F.
Space 18-24" on center

Useful as an accent in ponds, bog gardens, and containers. Beautiful weeping form.

Juncus pallidus

Tall rush

Clumping evergreen rush grows in neat vertical columns of dark green foliage. Evergreen in mild climates. Great in and near ponds and at water's edge.

Rush
Native to Australia and New Zealand
4 -5'
Full sun to light shade
Most soil
Regular to moderate water, will grow in water
Hardy to 18 degrees F. or less
Space 3-5' on center

Use in mixed plantings, or as an accent for its strongly vertical habit. Watch for re-seeding in moist sites.

Juncus patens

Grey rush

Clumping, slowly spreading rush can be found in seasonally wet meadows across much of central and northern California. Battleship-grey foliage is evergreen and handsome throughout the year. Drought tolerant once established.

Rush
Native to California and Oregon
2-3'
Sun to light shade
Wide variety of soils
Regular to moderate watering
Hardy to 10 degrees F. or less
Space 18-24" on center

Great accent and filler; used in drifts and masses in mixed meadows. Dependable foliage year round.

Juncus patens 'Elk Blue'

Grey rush

A tightly clumping native with erect, dark blue-green stems (most forms are greyer) topped in summer by chaffy flower heads.

Rush
Native to California and Oregon

To 2' high
Sun or light shade
Most soils
Moderate watering.
Hardy to 10 deg. F. or less
Space 18-24"

Useful at poolside, in mixed plantings, on banks. Can take "wet feet" in winter, some drought in summer.

Koeleria macrantha 'Irish Green'

June grass

Densely clumping, soft emerald green foliage is topped by showy flowers that emerge silvery and dry to a golden tan in June. Evergreen, cool-season grower, compact habit. Trim in mid summer to remove spent flowers and rejuvenate foliage.

Grass
Found throughout Northern Hemisphere – this strain from Ireland
6-8"
Prefers well-drained soil
Sun to light shade
Regular to moderate water
Hardy to 0 degrees F.

Great little accent flowering grass in meadows and natural lawns. Good massed in a perennial border.

Koeleria macrantha 'Spanish Silver'

June grass

Densely clumping, soft silvery grey foliage is topped by showy flowers in June which emerge silvery, then dry to a golden tan. Evergreen, cool-season grower, compact habit. Trim in mid summer to remove spent flowers and rejuvenate foliage.

Grass
Found throughout Northern Hemisphere – this strain collected in Spain
6-8"
Prefers well-drained soil
Sun to light shade
Regular to moderate water
Hardy to 0 degrees F.

Great little accent flowering grass in meadows and natural lawns. Good massed in a perennial border.

Leymus arenarius 'Findhorn'

Blue lyme grass

Creeping metallic blue grass collected in fabled Findhorn, Scotland is winter deciduous. It tolerates first exposure seacoast and excels in sandy soil. This warm season grass is a more compact and better-behaved version of the popular *Leymus a.* 'Glaucus'.

Grass
Native to Europe
12-24"
Sun or light shade
Well-drained soil
Regular to moderate water
Hardy to 0 degrees F.

Beautiful spreading blue foliage for coastal gardens.

Leymus condensatus 'Canyon Prince'

Giant wildrye

Sturdy grass has wide leaves that are greenish when young, then mature to a nice blue-grey. It spreads by underground stems and is useful for its bold presence and adaptability. Selected on Prince Island of the Channel Islands.

Grass
Native to California
3-4'
Sun to part shade
Most soils
Moderate to little watering
Hardy to 10 degrees F. or less
Space 3-4'

Useful on banks, in large scale plantings and for erosion control.

Leymus triticoides 'Elkhorn Green'

A selection distinguished by short, bright green foliage throughout the year. Can be kept lower than 2' with occasional mowing.

Grass
Native to California
3 -4'
Full sun to light shade
Wide variety of soils
Regular to moderate water, drought tolerant once established
Hardy to 10 degrees F. or less
Space 18-24" on center

A strong creeper – too aggressive for small garden settings.

Leymus triticoides 'Grey Dawn'

Creeping wild rye

This grass is best seen from a distance, when the effect of the extensive colony of slender erect stems is most pronounced. Slender silvery grey erect stems rise from spreading rhizomes and create a soft, sometimes undulating mass. Wand-like stems hold the flowers over the leaves. Tolerates hot inland conditions, winter-wet/summer-dry conditions, and first-exposure sea coast. Mow quarterly to keep plantings low and tidy.

Grass
Native to California and the West
2-3' high, spreading
Sun to part shade
Most soils
Occasional to little watering
Hardy to 10 degrees F. or less
Space 18-24" on center

Useful for naturalizing, erosion control, banks, meadows. Not recommended for small gardens.

Luzula sylvatica 'Marginata'

Wood rush

Wide green leaves with narrow cream edges bring a soft, lush effect to the shade garden as this wood rush forms spreading clumps. Spring flowers are held on well branched stems over the foliage. Easy and adaptable.

Rush
Native to Europe
12-20"
Light to full shade
Most soils
Regular to moderate watering
Hardy to 0 degrees F.
Space 18-24"

Effective and useful in shade gardens for groundcover with a lush appearance.

Lygeum spartum

False esparto grass

Slowly spreading evergreen grass with beautiful silver-grey foliage and unique showy flowers. Distinctive showy flowers look like flecks of cotton; dried persistent bracts are handsome on the plant from summer into fall. A true grass with delicate rush-like foliage.

Grass

Native to the Mediterranean

2-3' high

Sun or light shade

Tolerates a wide variety of soils

Moderate watering, drought tolerant when established

Hardy to 10 degrees F.

Space 12-18" on center

An excellent groundcover grass. Useful in groups or in large groundcover plantings.

Melica imperfecta

California melic

Clumping grass native to most of California. In coastal meadows it likes full sun, but in hot inland valleys it prefers shadier situations. Cool season grass is summer dormant when established. Delicate see-through flowers are held 6-12" above foliage.

Grass

Native to California

18-24"

Sun to light shade

Tolerates a wide variety of soils

Moderate water, extremely drought tolerant when established

Hardy to 10 degrees F.

Space 18-24" on center

Use in native meadows and mixed plantings. Avoid excessive summer water.

Melinis nerviglumis

Ruby grass

Tight clumps of fine-textured blue green leaves create low hummocks; thin flower stems carry silky tufts that change from ruby red to pink as the furry flowers emerge. This grass is not very cold hardy, but the flower display makes it worth growing as an annual. Not invasive.

Grass

Native to southern Africa

Lvs to 6", fl. stems to 18"

Sun to part shade

Most soils

Moderate to occasional watering

Hardy to 20-25 degrees F.

Space 18-24"

Useful for edging, in mixed plantings and flower gardens.

Milium effusum 'Aureum'

Golden wood millet

Soft yellow leaves are brightest in early spring on this clumping cool season grass. Of easy culture, leaves shift to greenish yellow in summer. Airy flowers.

Grass

Native to Eurasia

18"

Light to medium shade

Most soils

Regular to moderate watering

Hardy to 0 degrees F.

Space 18-24"

Useful as it brings vivid foliage color to shade gardens.

Miscanthus junceus

Okavanga Delta grass

Tall rush-like foliage grows in distinct vertical columns 8-10' high. Showy flowers emerge in fluffy plumes among slender spires of grey-green foliage. Clumping. Tolerates sea coast exposure, moist soils, and even desert conditions if given adequate moisture.

Grass

Native to southern Africa

6-10'

Sun

Most soils

Moderate to occasional watering

Hardy to 20-25 degrees F.

Space 3-8'

Beautiful as a specimen or in masses; great background grass for tropical savannah settings; good for screening.

Miscanthus sinensis

Eulalia

Thicket formers with erect, leafy seasonal stems and long narrow leaves. Stems are topped in summer and fall by glistening flower sprays. There are many cultivars, some with spectacular fall color. All have good winter presence when dormant.

Grass

Native to China and Taiwan

4-12' high

Sun or light shade

Regular to moderate watering

Most soils

Hardy to 0 deg. F. or less

Space 3-6'

Use them in tall perennial and mixed borders, at meadow edges and poolsides (where vigilance is needed to control spreading rhizomes).

Miscanthus transmorrisonensis

Evergreen miscanthus

Evergreen in mild areas, lax foliage clumps build to 3' high and up to 5' across. Plume-like flowers appear on long stems that arch out over the leaves. Though quite striking in flower, this is not a grass for the small garden.

Grass

Native to Taiwan

Lvs to 3', fl. stems to 5'+

Sun to part shade

Most soils

Moderate watering

Hardy to 0 degrees F.

Space 3-6'

Useful in mixed plantings, as background plant, or as large scale groundcover.

Muhlenbergia capillaris

Pink muhly

Clouds of shimmering pink flowers are held over dense foliage clumps in mid to late summer on this durable, adaptable grass. Foliage clumps are medium green, with long narrow leaves building up a firm cushion 18"-2' high, spreading to 2-4' across. Spectacular in bloom.

Grass

Native to southeastern U.S., West Indies, eastern Mexico

2'+ clump, flowers to 3'+

Sun to part shade

Most soils

Moderate to occasional watering

Hardy to 0 degrees F.

Space 2' or more

Use in mixed plantings, as an accent or in meadow gardens to display summer bloom.

Muhlenbergia capillaris 'White Cloud'

White cloud muhly

Frothy clusters of greenish ivory flowers sparkle in late summer over dense foliage clumps on this durable, adaptable grass. Foliage clumps are medium green, with long narrow leaves building up a firm cushion 2' high, spreading to 2-4'. Spectacular in bloom.

Grass

Native to southeastern U.S., West Indies, eastern Mexico

2'+, flowers to 3'+

Sun to part shade

Most soils

Moderate to occasional watering

Hardy to 0 degrees F.

Space 2' or more

Use in mixed plantings, as an accent or in meadow gardens to display summer bloom.

Muhlenbergia dubia

Pine muhly

Think of this as a compact form of the reliable favorite deer grass, *M. rigens*. Narrow grey-green leaves form a very dense tidy clump; thin flower stems are in more of a hemispherical arrangement than deer grass. Summer bloom.

Grass

Native to southwest US, northern Mexico

Lvs. to 16", fl. stems 2-3'

Prefers full sun

Most soils

Moderate to occasional watering

Hardy to 10 degrees F. or less

Space 3' or more

Use on banks, in mixed plantings as an accent, or as background plant.

Muhlenbergia dumosa

Bamboo muhly

Billowy grass carries many tiny leaves on arching bamboo-like stems. Great in containers. Looks best with moderate watering. Resents hard pruning.

Grass

Native from Arizona into Mexico

4-5'

Sun to part shade

Well-drained soil

Moderate to occasional watering

Hardy to 10 degrees F. or less

Space 3-4' or more

Use as vertical accent, or plant in drifts as a soft screen.

Muhlenbergia lindheimeri

Lindheimer's muhly

Beautiful silver-grey foliage is topped by showy vertical flower spikes in September that rise two to three feet above the foliage. As good by the coast as it is in desert conditions, this grass will tolerate heat as long as it gets adequate moisture.

Grass

Native to Texas

Foliage to 3', flowers to 6'

Full sun to light shade

Most soil

Regular to moderate watering, drought tolerant once established

Hardy to 10 degrees F.

Space 3-4' on center

Beautiful foliage and flowering effects. Makes a great background grass, accent or planted as a mass.

Muhlenbergia pubescens

Soft muhly

Evergreen dense mounds of furry blue-grey leaves are about 2' tall and wide, with draping leaves. Purplish summer flowers are airy, but not particularly striking. This species brings a reliable grace to any planting; clumps stay tidy all year.

Grass

Native to Sonora desert, Mexico

2' high

Sun to part shade

Well-drained soil

Moderate to occasional watering

Hardy to 10 degrees F. or less

Space 4' or more on center

Probably more suited for planting as a specimen or accent than in masses or drifts.

Muhlenbergia rigens

Deer grass

Dense fountain-shaped clumps of green leaves rise to 2-3'; thin flower stems rise another 2-3' in late summer and fall. Overall effect is both graceful and sculptural. This very adaptable grass stays greener with occasional summer watering, but tolerates drought. It can be found in nature in seeps as well as in dry canyons. Dried stems were traditionally used for basket-making by indigenous people.

Grass

Native to California and the Southwest

Lvs to 2', fl. stems to 4-5'

Sun to part shade

Most soils

Moderate to little watering

Hardy to 0 degrees F.

Space 3' or more

Useful for naturalizing. Dried flower stems create attractive winter silhouette.

Nassella cernua (Stipa cernua)

Nodding needle grass

Beautiful fine-textured grass can be found throughout California grasslands. Spring flowers have noticeable needle-like awns which are extremely showy when backlit.

Grass

Native to California

2-3' high

Sun to light shade

Tolerates a wide variety of soils
Moderate watering; drought tolerant when established
Hardy to 10 degrees F.
Space 12-24" on center

Use in native meadows and plantings. Good accent when planted in groups. Avoid excessive summer water.

Nassella lepida (Stipa lepida)

Foothill needlegrass

Smaller scale than the other needlegrass species, this clumping bunchgrass keeps foliage clumps under 8" high. Airy flower sprays in spring are well displayed. Can reseed to form a low natural lawn.

Grass
Native to California
Lvs to 8", fl. stems to 18"+
Sun to part shade
Most soils
Occasional to little watering
Hardy to 10 degrees F. or less
Space 2' or more

Useful in meadows, mixed plantings, on banks. Flowers ornamental when backlit.

Nassella pulchra (Stipa pulchra)

Purple needlegrass

Cool season bunchgrass forms sturdy clumps of narrow green leaves. Spring flower stems rise in a starburst pattern and display graceful clusters of nodding, long-awned flowers. Backlit flowers are especially effective. Native to many California plant communities, it can be used on banks, in meadows or as an accent in mixed plantings.

Grass
Native to California and Baja California
Lvs. to 12", fl. stems to 2'+
Sun to part shade
Most soils
Moderate to little watering
Hardy to 10 degrees F. or less
Space 18-24" or more

Useful for naturalizing. Summer drought will bring dormancy—can be cut low in late summer.

Ophiopogon clarkii

Meadow mondo

Beautiful slowly creeping dark green foliage is an excellent low groundcover for shady gardens. More meadow-like than the popular *O. japonicus*, fine textured leaves are evergreen.

Grass-like perennial
Native to China
6-8", can be kept lower with occasional clipping
Part shade to shade
Wide variety of soils
Regular to moderate watering
Hardy to 10 degrees F.
Space 6-12" on center

Good in masses. A great grass-like groundcover for shady gardens. Will tolerate occasional traffic.

Ophiopogon japonicus 'Variegatus'

Silver Comet

Compact, clumping evergreen grass-like plant with beautiful silver-white variegation. Though flowers are insignificant, the beautiful silver foliage will brighten any shady garden. Tolerates full sun by the coast, but is best with afternoon shade in inland gardens.

Grass-like perennial
Native to China
6-8" high
Light shade to shade
Regular to moderate water
Wide variety of soils
Hardy to 10 degrees F.
Space 6-12" on center

Useful in pots, edges, and between pavers; good for tropical & foliage effects.

Ophiopogon planiscapus--green

Green mondo grass

This tough, dark green grass-like plant is the species form of the popular 'black mondo' grass. Showy creamy-white flowers are airbrushed with silver-grey highlights, followed by a dark purple berry. Evergreen.

Grass-like perennial
Native to China
6-8"
Light shade to shade
Well-drained soils
Hardy to 10 degrees F.
Space 6-12" on center

Durable groundcover that deserves greater use. Tolerates tree-root competition. Good for massing in shady gardens; combines well with ferns.

Panicum virgatum

Tall switch grass

Dense thickets of erect seasonal stems. Long narrow leaves, silvery to blue-green in several cultivars, elegant open flower panicles in summer. Some have beautiful fall color.

Grass
Native to eastern North America
4-8' high
Sun or light shade
Most soils
Moderate watering
Hardy to below 0 deg. F.
Space 2-4'

Use them in the background of perennial borders and meadow edges, or for bold display.

Pennisetum alopecuroides 'Little Bunny'

Chinese fountain grass

Small delicate clump of medium green foliage is topped with showy foxtail-like flowers in midsummer. Warm-season grower is winter dormant. Lives longer in climates with pronounced winter chill.

Grass
Native to China
8-12"
Sun to light shade
Most soils
Regular watering
Hardy to 0 degrees F.
Space 12" on center

A great little flowering grass for pots, edging, and massing. Needs plenty of moisture in hot interior climates.

Pennisetum 'Fairy Tails'

Fairy Tails fountain grass

This introduction from Greenlee Nursery is clumping, with soft, blue-green foliage topped by vertical foxtails that are showy from April well into fall. Flower plumes emerge iridescent creamy pink and dry to an attractive tan color. This is one of the longest blooming fountain grasses and one of the first to bloom in the spring.

- Grass
- Garden hybrid
- Foliage 2-3', flowers to 4'
- Full sun to light shade
- Most soils
- Regular to moderate watering
- Hardiness uncertain, probably 15 degrees F. or less
- Space 3-4' on center

Stunning when backlit – great in masses. This is a sterile hybrid, and does not reseed.

Pennisetum frutescens

Naked fountain grass

Unique clumping tall flowering grass is distinguished by evergreen stems that persist after deciduous leaves fall. Showy flowers last from spring into fall, and glaucous blue-green stems create see-through effect in winter. Site so texture and flowers can be backlit by sun.

- Grass
- Native to South America
- 4-5'
- Full sun to light shade
- Wide variety of soils
- Regular to moderate water, drought tolerant once established
- Hardy to 25 degrees F.
- Space 3-5' on center

Effective as a background grass or in large sweeps and masses. Good in pots. Useful for erosion control.

***Pennisetum setaceum* 'Cupreum'**

Purple fountain grass

Beautiful foliar and flowering accent in the garden with handsome reddish-purple foliage flowers from spring until killing frost. Clumping habit. Tolerates sea coast exposures and is evergreen--and quite popular--in mild climates.

- Grass
- Native to India and northern Africa
- 4-5'
- Full sun to light shade
- Most soils
- Regular to moderate watering, drought tolerant once established
- Hardy to 25 degrees F.
- Space 3-4' on center

Good in as an accent or in groups. Excellent in containers. Makes a fine annual grass in colder climates.

Pennisetum massaicum

Red bunny tails

Clumping dark green foliage is topped by showy rabbit's-foot like flowers that emerge reddish black and dry to a deep tan. Flowers are showy on the plant from spring into late summer. Foliage is evergreen in mild climates but blushes reddish purple with the arrival of cooler temperatures in fall.

- Grass
- Native to central Africa
- Foliage to 12", flowers to 24"
- Full sun to light shade
- Wide variety of soils

Regular to moderate watering
Hardy to 18 degrees F.
Space 18-24" on center

Great flowering grass for meadows or in perennial borders; great specimen alone or in pots, also lovely massed. Flowers are irresistible to the touch.

***Pennisetum orientale* 'Tall Tails'**

Oriental fountain grass

This clumping grass with low green leaves carries tall flower stems reaching 4' or more. They are topped with long pinkish flower plumes which age to cream. Leaves die down in winter.

Grass
Native to central Asia, Pakistan
4'+ high
Sun or light shade
Well-drained soil
Moderate watering
Hardy to 0 degrees F or less
Space 18-24" on center

Use in mixed plantings or as mass planting.

***Pennisetum spathiolatum* (*P. sphacelatum*?)**

Slender veldt grass

This evergreen grass sends up 2-3', vertical flower stalks which sway over lower mounding foliage. The spikey flowers may be brown or golden depending on the stage of flowering. Not known to be weedy. It may go dormant in colder climates.

Grass
Origin and naming in question, possibly from southern Africa
12-18" foliage, flowers to 2-3'
Full sun to light shade
Most soils
Regular to moderate watering
Hardy to 18 degrees F. or less
Space 18-24" on center

Use as accent in beds or borders, as low screen, for mass planting, or in meadows.

Poa arachnifera

Texas bluegrass

An excellent creeping grass that spreads underground rhizomes to form colonies. Excellent groundcover for large-scale situations that can be mowed if desired. Dark green leaves are topped by silky, silvery flowers in early spring, blooming even in the shade. An evergreen, cool season grower. Endangered in its natural range.

Grass
Native to Texas and Oklahoma
8-16"
Full sun to shade
Most soils
Regular to moderate watering, drought tolerant once established
Hardy to 0 degrees F.
Space 8-18" on center

An excellent base grass for large-scale meadows. Aggressive creeper in moist soils. Good as filler and for pathways.

***Schizachyrium scoparium* 'The Blues'**

Little bluestem

Tightly clumping grass with erect 2-4' stems, narrow chalky-blue leaves and luminous pink flower stems, the flower spikelets becoming silvery as they age. Vivid bronze to maroon fall color.

Grass
Native to Eastern North America
2-4' high
Prefers full sun
Reasonably well-drained soil
Moderate to occasional watering.
Hardy to below 0 deg. F.
Space 2-3'

Beautiful in small drifts, in meadows and on banks.

Scirpus cernuus

Fiber optic grass

Densely clumping rush-like sedge creeps around. Glossy bright yellow-green foliage and terminal dark flower spikes resemble fiber optic threads. Needs constant moisture to thrive.

Sedge
Native to Northern Hemisphere
6-12"
Full sun to light shade
Most soils
Regular watering
Hardy to 10 degrees F.
Space 8-12" on center

Good in containers and hanging baskets. Looks great spilling over edges. Will grow in water or at pond's edge. Great accent plant.

Sesleria autumnalis

Autumn moor grass

Dependable, clumping yellow-green foliage makes this one of the best groundcover grasses for meadows throughout California. Always tidy, it makes a handsome lawn replacement. Noticeable flowers emerge silvery white and dry to an attractive deep tan, adding an understated sparkle to the foliage. Few grasses have such great year-round appeal. Poorly suited to desert gardens, but thrives in all other California gardens.

Grass
Native to Europe
8-12"
Full sun to light shade
Most soils
Regular to moderate watering
Hardy to 0 degrees F.
Space 8-12" on center

A very versatile grass, adaptable to many situations.

Sesleria caerulea

Blue moor grass

Petite clumping groundcover grass for small-scale gardens has rich blue-green foliage which displays a beautiful foliar accent; flowers are insignificant. Not at its best in hot interior valleys, and needs some winter chill to thrive.

Grass
Native to Europe
6-8"
Sun to light shade
Well-drained soil
Regular to moderate watering, drought tolerant once established
Hardy to 0 degrees F.

Space 6-8" on center

Good in groups and drifts, for edges and borders. Nice for rock gardens.

Sesleria 'Greenlee's Hybrid'

Greenlee's moor grass

A hybrid that occurred at Greenlee Nursery with beautiful medium-green foliage and noticeable tan flowers. This great clumping groundcover grass has become a popular base grass for small-scale meadows with year round tidy foliage and rich green color. Tolerates hot inland valleys with regular water.

Grass

Horticultural in origin – unknown sterile hybrid

8-10"

Full sun to light shade

Most soils

Regular to moderate watering

Hardy to 0 degrees F.

Space 8-12" on center

Excellent small-scale groundcover.

Sesleria heufleriana

Meadow moor grass

This dependable clumping grass for small-scale California meadows has rich dark green foliage with a chalky white underside to the leaf. Lustrous foliage looks good year round. Flowers are noticeable but not showy.

Grass

Native to Southern Europe

8-10"

Full sun to light shade

Most soils

Regular to moderate water

Hardy to below 0 degrees F.

Space 8-12" on center

Low, evergreen, tidy foliage makes this an excellent grass to replace a lawn.

Sesleria nitida

Grey moor grass

Clumping pointed grey foliage is topped with showy dark flowers in late winter. Evergreen and cool-season growing, this is one of the first grasses to bloom in spring. Pointed leaf tips are prickly to touch, but the handsome foliage makes a wonderful silver accent useful in many garden settings.

Grass

Native to Italy

12-16"

Full sun to light shade

Well-drained soil

Regular to moderate watering, drought tolerant once established

Hardy to 0 degrees F.

Space 12-16" on center

Excellent in rock gardens; good as a singular plant or in drifts.

Spartina bakeri

Sand cordgrass

Tall clumping fine-textured foliage has year round appeal in California gardens. Medium khaki-green foliage makes an upright column 4-5' high and spreading with age. Noticeable but not showy flowers emerge in the summer and are handsome on the plant throughout the year. Tolerates first exposure seacoast.

Grass
Native to coastal southeast U.S.
4-6'
Sun to light shade
Most soils
Regular to occasional watering
Hardy to 10 degrees F.
Space 3-6' or more

Use in mixed plantings for sculptural effect. An excellent tall background grass, great in groups and masses in large meadows. Good for screening. Not invasive.

Sporobolus airoides

Alkali sacaton

Tough clumping native grass deserves more use in California gardens. Beautiful clumping blue-grey foliage is topped by airy flowers that emerge pink in early summer and dry to a golden haze, remaining showy on the plant into fall. This winter dormant grass is tolerant of a wide range of extreme conditions from wet to dry, and will accept saline and alkaline soils.

Grass
Native to California and the West
2-3'
Full sun to light shade
Wide variety of soils, including saline & alkaline conditions
Regular to moderate watering, extremely drought tolerant once established
Hardy to 0 degrees F.
18-24" on center

Good in groups and masses. Naturalizes. Good in bioswales.

Sporobolus wrightii

Wright's dropseed

Beautiful arching grey-green foliage is topped by impressive golden flowers that rise three to four feet above the leaves. This well-behaved clumping grass is stunning when backlit. Tough as nails, it tolerates conditions throughout California, from first exposure sea coast to hot inland desert, and stays evergreen in mild climates.

Grass
Native to southwestern North America
3-4' foliage, flowers to 6'
Full sun
Wide variety of soils
Regular to moderate watering, extremely drought tolerant once established
Hardy to 0 degrees F.
Space 4-5' on center

An excellent background grass for massing in large gardens. Excellent as a single specimen or in drifts.

Stipa gigantea

Giant feather grass

Low green leaves form substantial clump to 3' across; dramatic spikes of shiny golden flowers are held well over the leaves in summer. Spikes are spectacular when backlit.

Grass
Native to southern Europe, North Africa
Lvs to 2', fl. stems to 6-8'
Sun to light shade
Well-drained soil
Moderate to occasional watering
Hardy to 0 degrees F.
Space 3-4' or more

Use as bold accent in mixed plantings, or as a drift in large scale meadows. Not at its best in hot, dry climates.

***Stipa gigantea* 'Little Giant'**

Giant feather grass

Dramatic bunchgrass with tight clumps of stiff, 1' leaves. Flower stems rise to 3' in this selection to display golden flower spikelets in open panicles.

Grass

Native to southern Europe, North Africa

Leaves to 1', fl. stems to 3'

Sun to light shade

Well-drained soil

Moderate to occasional watering

Hardy to 0 degrees F.

Space 3-4' or more

Use it alone for bold display or in groups for large meadows and banks. Not a good choice for hot-summer areas.

***Stipa ramosissima* (*Austrostipa ramosissima*)**

Pillar of smoke

Bamboo-like stems form bright green columns; actual leaves are soft and green. Airy clouds of tiny purplish-green flowers are held among the stems and foliage creating the "smoke" effect. Evergreen.

Grass

Native to Australia

6-7' stems; 3' wide

Sun to part shade

Most soils

Moderate to occasional watering

Hardy to 15-20 degrees F.

Space 3' or more

Use as vertical accent in mixed plantings. Watch for re-seeding.

Vetiver zizanioides

Vetiver

A durable clumping grass that forms a strong vertical column, vetiver is renowned for erosion control. Roots can grow 10-12' deep and are useful in slope and streambed stabilization. In fall, the fine-textured foliage blushes a beautiful purple-red and leaf tips curl like party streamers. Its fragrant roots are the source of vetiver oil used in perfume production, which has made it an important commercial plant in India for thousands of years. Tolerates coastal to desert conditions. This is a non-flowering clone.

Grass

Native to India

4-5'

Full sun to light shade

Wide variety of soils

Regular to moderate water, extremely drought tolerant once established

Hardy to 10 degrees F.

Space 12-24" on center

Excellent background grass in groups or masses; one of the best grasses for erosion control on steep slopes.

***Vetiver zizanioides* 'Silver Rockets'**

Silver Rockets vetiver

This durable clumping grass forms a strong vertical column and is renowned for erosion control. Roots can grow 10-12' deep and are useful in slope and streambed stabilization. Foliage is narrower and more silver than the species, and in summer is topped with slender silvery flower spikes rising several feet above the foliage, for an overall height of

6 - 8'. Foliage stays evergreen throughout winter.

Grass

Native to India

Foliage 4-5', flowers to 8'

Full sun to light shade

Wide variety of soils

Regular to moderate water, extremely drought tolerant once established

Hardy to 10 degrees F.

Space 12 - 24" on center

Excellent background grass in groups or masses. One of the best grasses for erosion control on steep slopes.