

## Perennial means enduring...

Annuals live and die in one season and must be replanted each year. Plants that die down, endure the winter, but grow back bigger than ever when the spring comes, are perennials. Perennials can be planted at any time throughout the growing season, until 2-3 weeks before the ground freezes. If you buy established perennials and plant them early, it's a pretty safe bet you'll get blooms in your garden before winter. Buying established plants is the fastest way to produce beautiful results in your garden. Plant perennials once and enjoy their beauty year after year. Perennials come in all shapes and sizes. Become acquainted with fail-safe heirloom perennials, or the hottest new gorgeous plant. Learning about design basics can provide you with a lifetime of gardening joy.

Learning to use the diverse colors and textures of perennials is an endless joy. After all, isn't it the pure pleasure of watching your garden bloom and thrive throughout the spring, summer and fall that sparks your interest in the first place? Picking perennials that will thrive in your garden depends on a few things: the climate in your region; the amount of sun that reaches the planting area; the different bloom times of the perennials you choose; the flower colors you like best; the mature height and width of each plant; and the condition of the perennial at your reputable garden center.

Many perennials are grown for their foliage shape and texture as well as their beautiful blooms. They offer dramatic visual contrasts or harmonies in addition to flower colors. The ways to enhance your landscape becomes endless. As your perennial knowledge and experience increases, your landscape will increase in value as well as long-term beauty. You will soon discover the true beauty and many varieties of perennials that are available

## gardening is ...

For most of us, our daily lives have become a complex balancing act between family, work, recreation and maintaining our homes. Although we would probably like to be involved in activities that will improve our own well being and that of the world around us, finding a way to fit such projects into our schedules seems a daunting task. But is it? Right in our back yards - front yards - and decks - we can do something that is fun, healthy, good for the environment and adds beauty to our surroundings as well. Design your garden based on what you like to do to make sure you spend most of your time doing just that.

Gardening is like taking a vacation in our very own yard. It is a chance to get away and *relax* in the comfort of nature. Gardening allows you to dig in, *get your hands dirty* and reconnect with nature.



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## MID-SIZED GRASSES ...



...separate or blend strong flower colors in the garden. Their year-round beauty provides eye appeal when fall gardens can look tired. Perfect for our humid hot summer weather, they almost thrive on neglect, and are not fussy about soil. Useful on a slope where it may be difficult to mow, or at the seaside, waterside, or in a naturalized area, grasses are so versatile. Try them in fresh or dried flower arrangements.

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## **MID-SIZED GRASSES...**

### **Calamagrostis ‘Karl Foerster’ Feather Reed Grass**

2001 Perennial Plant of the Year. While the 18–24" foliage grows in a handsome, arching clump, it is the tall, slender upright flower spikes that distinguish this grass. The graceful golden spikes rise 4–5' above the foliage in May and June, and persist well into the winter. The only difference between ‘Karl Foerster’ and the stricta is that in colder climates ‘Karl Foerster’ grows more compactly and blooms 2 to 3 weeks earlier. Try it with Fountain Grasses for a classic combination. Like the species, ‘Karl Foerster’ works well with a myriad of woodies, perennials, and other grasses.

**Plant 30 in apart, Zone 4–9, full sun to part shade**

### **Cortaderia ‘Andes Silver’ True Hardy Pampas Grass**

Popular in home gardens since Victorian times for their stunning flowers and architectural form, the modern dwarf Pampas cultivars have great potential for our gardens with their compact height and prolific blooms. The 5–7' ‘Andes Silver’ is truly hardy, has large creamy plumes in the fall, and is great as a cut flower or specimen in the garden.

**Plant 48 to 60 in apart, Zone 5–10, full sun**

### **Cortadaria ‘Pumila’ Dwarf Pampas Grass**

If you like the look of Pampas Grass, but find it too tall for your gardening needs, ‘Pumila’ may be the answer. This introduction has foliage no more than 4–5' tall, and plumes that reach only 5' or 6'. Its lovely, creamy-white plumes will add grace and interest in the small border or as an accent plant by itself. It has proven hardy as far north as Long Island, and has been known to survive mild winters in our Zone 7.

**Plant 36 to 48 in apart, Zone 7–10, full sun**

### **Miscanthus ‘Dixieland’ Dwarf Variegated Grass**

This 3–4' dwarf version of Variegated Miscanthus should strike a chord with gardeners who like the bright green and white striped leaves of the larger Variegated Miscanthus, but yearn for a shorter version for the smaller garden.

**Plant 36 to 48 in apart, Zone 6–9, full sun**

### **Miscanthus ‘Little Nicky’ Dwarf Zebra Grass**

Green foliage with yellow horizontal stripes like ‘Zebrainus’, but only reaches 3–4'. The answer for those who love the striking look of Zebra Grass, but yearned for a shorter version.

**Plant 36 to 48 in apart, Zone 5–9, full sun**

### **purpurascens Red-leaved Miscanthus**

Green, with a strong vertical growth habit all growing season, it produces a magenta-colored bloom that turns to white in September. Best of all, the leaves turn intensely orange-red in August. In the middle of the border, it will also help ease the transition from one color or texture to another. Grows 4–5'.

**Plant 36 to 48 in apart, Zone 6–9, full sun**

### **Miscanthus ‘Yaku Jima’ Dwarf Maiden Grass**

It provides the strong narrow green leaves of Maiden Grass, but in a 3–4' version. It achieves a thick, full clump of billowing, arched foliage quickly, and silver flowers in August. If you're unsure about the tall varieties, but want to try an ornamental grass in your gardening scheme, ‘Yaku Jima’ is the answer.

**Plant 36 to 48 in apart, Zone 5–9, full sun**

### **Panicum virgatum ‘Prairie Sky’**

#### **Blue Switchgrass**

Truly the bluest of the Panicums, the blue leaves are accented by narrow stems that carry the airy, delicate-looking blue seed heads from August on at 3–4'. This compact Wisconsin native is a strong, upright grower, breaks dormancy sooner than other Panicums, will never need staking, and trust us—it's blue.

**Plant 36 in apart, Zone 5–9, full sun**

### **Panicum ‘Shenandoah’ Red Switchgrass**

This gorgeous Panicum has the brightest burgundy fall foliage we've seen so far. Green leaves at 4' in early summer, begin turning dark red in July, and are a rich burgundy by September. Looking for all the world like Blood Grass on steroids, its red panicles appear in August.

**Plant 36 in apart, Zone 5–9, full sun**

### **Pennisetum alopecuroides Fountain Grass**

Fountain Grasses are about as versatile as an ornamental grass can be. This mound grower has finely textured, arching, rich-green leaf blades with rose/coppery-tan seed plumes or “fox tails” that appear on the tufts in Aug-Oct, then last all winter, reaching a height of 3–4'. It is used extensively for borders, in masses, as a specimen plant, or incorporated in water or poolside plantings.

**Plant 24–30 in apart, Zone 5–9, full sun**

### **Pennisetum ‘Hameln’ Dwarf Fountain Grass**

‘Hameln’ is almost identical to P. alopecuroides, but is a bit more compact, blooms a little earlier beginning in July, and is shorter in height at 2–3' tall. Its tassles emerge rosy and turn a coppery tan. All the Fountain Grasses are tuft or mound-growers, so they are definitely not invasive.

**Plant 24–30 in apart, Zone 5–9, full sun**

### **Pennisetum ‘Cassian’ Cassian Fountain Grass**

This is a compact, strong-growing 18–24" Fountain Grass, the green leaves of which are tinged with red in the fall. Blooming from August to October, its dark brown inflorescence gradually fades to a lovely beige.

**Plant 24–30 in apart, Zone 6–9, full sun**

### **‘Moudry’ Black Flowering Fountain Grass**

Its striking, long, dark-brown, almost black, plumes emerge neatly from the arching, deep green leaf blades in September on this late blooming Fountain Grass. ‘Moudry’ is compact and neat at 2–3' and makes a good cut flower.

**Plant 24–30 inches apart Zone 5–9 full sun**

### **Pennisetum orientale Oriental Fountain Grass**

A Fountain Grass with fox tail-like flowers from July- Oct that grow to 2–3' in height. Its look is more delicate and open than P. alopecuroides or ‘Hameln’. Its foliage has a gray-green appearance that blends with its lovely, purplish-pink, arching seed heads that turn white later in the summer.

**Plant 24 in apart, Zone 6–9, full sun**

### **orientale ‘Karley Rose’ Oriental Pink Fountain Grass**

It is decidedly rich pink in color when it appears in June. Kept dead-headed, it will bloom into early fall, with seed heads gradually changing from rosy-mauve to creamy white. The extraordinary blooms are accompanied by darker green foliage which is a bit more upright than the species at 2–3'.

**Plant 24 in apart, Zone 5–9, full sun**

### **Pennisetum ‘Rubrum’ Purple-leaved Fountain Grass**

Striking maroon leaves keep their color all summer, and the 6–8" long maroon seed heads are lovely from June until frost on this 4' Fountain Grass. This is a perennial that is not hardy through our winter.

**Plant 24 to 30 in apart, Zone 8–10, full sun**

### **scoparium ‘The Blues’ Little Bluestem**

A US native, it is effectively massed as a naturalized ground cover for erosion control, or as a specimen. Its narrow, upright, light-blue foliage has soft, somewhat hairy leaves about 12" long, but most of its 3' height consists of delicate flower spikes that appear from July-Sept. Known for holding its bronze to flaming-orange fall color well into winter, and has attractive seed heads as well.

**Plant 18 in apart, Zone 3–10, full sun**