Common Cottongrass

Eriophorum angustifolium



Common Cottongrass flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 24 inches

Spread: 4 feet

Sunlight:

Hardiness Zone: 4

Other Names: Cotton Grass, Tall Cottongrass, Bog Cotton

Description:

This natural bog plant looks grassy but is actually a sedge; airy white plumes appear in late spring and are stunning when massed; prefers highly acidic soil around pond edges or bogs

Ornamental Features

Common Cottongrass features showy plumes of white flowers at the ends of the stems in late spring. Its grassy leaves remain green in color throughout the season.

Landscape Attributes

Common Cottongrass is a dense herbaceous perennial with an upright spreading habit of growth. It brings an extremely fine and delicate texture to the garden composition and should be used to full effect.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and is best cleaned up in early spring before it resumes active growth for the season. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Invasive

Common Cottongrass is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Mass Planting
- Water Gardens
- Container Planting
- Bog Gardens

Planting & Growing

Common Cottongrass will grow to be about 22 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 4 feet. Its foliage tends to remain dense right to the ground, not requiring facer plants in front. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 10 years. As an herbaceous perennial, this plant will usually die back to the crown each winter, and will regrow from the base each spring. Be careful not to disturb the crown in late winter when it may not be readily seen!

This plant should only be grown in full sunlight. It prefers to grow in moist to wet soil, and will even tolerate some standing water. It may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. It is particular about its soil conditions, with a strong preference for rich, acidic soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is native to parts of North America. It can be propagated by division.

Common Cottongrass is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. With its upright habit of growth, it is best suited for use as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants and those that spill over the edges. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.