Prairie Munchkin Bluestem

Schizachyrium scoparium 'Prairie Munchkin'

Height: 30 inches

Spread: 24 inches

Sunlight:

Hardiness Zone: 3

Other Names: Little Bluestem

Description:

A smaller variety for hot, dry areas with consistent blue-green, ribbon-like foliage that takes on hues of bronze, red, and maroon in fall; silvery white seed heads persist well into winter; an outstanding accent plant



Prairie Munchkin Bluestem in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Prairie Munchkin Bluestem is primarily grown for its highly ornamental fruit. The silver seed heads are carried on showy plumes displayed in abundance from early fall to late winter. Its attractive grassy leaves are bluish-green in color. As an added bonus, the foliage turns gorgeous shades of coppery-bronze, red and burgundy in the fall. It has masses of beautiful spikes of creamy white flowers rising above the foliage from late summer to early fall, which are most effective when planted in groupings.



Prairie Munchkin Bluestem in fall
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Prairie Munchkin Bluestem is an herbaceous perennial grass 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 cut back to the ground in late winter before active growth resumes. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Prairie Munchkin Bluestem is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Rock/Alpine Gardens
- General Garden Use
- Groundcover
- Container Planting



Prairie Munchkin Bluestem in fall
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Planting & Growing

Prairie Munchkin Bluestem will grow to be about 24 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 24 inches. It grows at a medium 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 is very adaptable to both dry and moist locations, and should do just fine under typical garden conditions. It is considered to be drought-tolerant, and thus makes an ideal choice for a low-water garden or xeriscape application. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This is a selection of a native North American species. It can be propagated by division; however, as a cultivated variety, be aware that it may be subject to certain restrictions or prohibitions on propagation.

Prairie Munchkin Bluestem 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.