El Toro Bull Grass

Muhlenbergia emersleyi 'El Toro'



El Toro Bull Grass foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Plant Height: 24 inches

Flower Height: 3 feet

Spread: 3 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 6

Other Names: Muhly Grass

Description:

A mounding grass with very fine, blue-green foliage; airy plumes of rosy-purple flowers in late summer that eventually fade to tan seed pods in late fall and winter; breathtaking planted in masses; very heat and drought tolerant once established

Ornamental Features

El Toro Bull Grass features airy plumes of rose flowers with violet overtones rising above the foliage from late summer to mid fall. Its attractive grassy leaves remain bluish-green in color throughout the season. The tan seed heads are carried on showy plumes displayed in abundance in late fall.

Landscape Attributes

El Toro Bull Grass is a dense herbaceous perennial grass with a shapely form and gracefully arching stems. 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. Deer don't particularly care for this plant and will usually leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. It has no significant negative characteristics.

El Toro Bull Grass is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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

Planting & Growing

El Toro Bull Grass will grow to be about 24 inches tall at maturity extending to 3 feet tall with the flowers, with a spread of 3 feet. It grows at a slow 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 does best in full sun to partial shade. It prefers dry to average moisture levels with very well-drained soil, and will often die in standing water. It is considered to be drought-tolerant, and thus makes an ideal choice for a low-water garden or xeriscape application. It is particular about its soil conditions, with a strong preference for poor, acidic soils. 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.

El Toro Bull Grass is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. Because of its height, it is often used 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.