Bear Grass

Nolina stricta



Bear Grass
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 20 feet

Spread: 15 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 9

Other Names: Ponytail Palm, Elephant's Foot, Beaucarnea stricta

Description:

A stunning accent plant that develops a swollen base over time, under rising tufts of narrow green leaves; must be very old to bloom; water deeply but infrequently; protect from frost; an excellent container plant that can be brought in for winter



Bear Grass
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Bear Grass has attractive bluish-green evergreen foliage on a tree with an upright spreading habit of growth. The serrated narrow leaves are highly ornamental and remain bluish-green throughout the winter. It features showy panicles of creamy white flowers with white overtones and violet streaks rising above the foliage from early to mid summer. The furrowed gray bark is extremely showy and adds significant winter interest.

Landscape Attributes

Bear Grass is an evergreen tree with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its average texture blends into the landscape, but can be balanced by one or two finer or coarser trees or shrubs for an effective composition.

This is a relatively low maintenance tree, and should not require much pruning, except when necessary, such as to remove dieback. It is a good choice for attracting birds to your yard, but is not particularly attractive to deer who tend to leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Bear Grass is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Bear Grass will grow to be about 20 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 15 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 6 feet from the ground, and is suitable for planting under power lines. As it matures, the lower branches of this tree can be strategically removed to create a high enough canopy to support unobstructed human traffic underneath. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 80 years or more.

This tree 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 xeriscaping or the moisture-conserving landscape. It is not particular as to soil pH, but grows best in sandy soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is not originally from North America..

Bear Grass is a fine choice for the yard, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. Its large size and upright habit of growth lend it for use as a solitary accent, or in a composition surrounded by smaller plants around the base 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 grown in a container, it may not perform exactly as indicated on the tag - this is to be expected. Also note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.