Thatching Reed

Thamnochortus insignis

Height: 6 feet

Spread: 8 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 8

Description:

Tall growing, arching grass-like reed plant with stems bearing tight whorls of branchlets of very fine foliage; dark brown flower bracts in summer; a truly exotic presentation as a garden accent or along borders



Thatching Reed in fall
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Thatching Reed fruit
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

Thatching Reed features showy spikes of brown flowers rising above the foliage from mid to late summer. The flowers are excellent for cutting. Its attractive threadlike leaves remain green in color throughout the year. The dark brown fruits which fade to coppery-bronze over time are held in abundance in spectacular clusters from mid to late fall. The bluish-green stems are very colorful and add to the overall interest of the plant.

Landscape Attributes

Thatching Reed is an herbaceous evergreen perennial with a shapely form and gracefully arching foliage. 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. It is a good choice for attracting birds to your yard. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Thatching Reed is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Rock/Alpine Gardens
- General Garden Use

Planting & Growing

Thatching Reed will grow to be about 6 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 8 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 1 foot from the ground. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 15 years. As an evegreen perennial, this plant will typically keep its form and foliage year-round. This is a dioecious species, meaning that individual plants are either male or female. Only the females will produce fruit, and a male variety of the same species is required nearby as a pollinator.

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 not particular as to soil type, but has a definite preference for acidic soils, and is able to handle environmental salt. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is not originally from North America..