National Arboretum Fountain Grass

Pennisetum alopecuroides 'National Arboretum'



National Arboretum Fountain Grass
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Plant Height: 24 inches

Flower Height: 3 feet

Spread: 4 feet

Sunlight:

Hardiness Zone: 4

Description:

Fine textured, shiny green foliage changes to a golden tan in fall; noted for its distinctive, dark purple plumes in midsummer, that persist until winter; beautiful as a garden accent or massed in borders or rock gardens

Ornamental Features

National Arboretum Fountain Grass has masses of beautiful plumes of deep purple flowers with violet overtones rising above the foliage from mid to late summer, which are most effective when planted in groupings. Its attractive glossy grassy leaves are green in color. As an added bonus, the foliage turns gorgeous shades of gold and in the fall. The tan seed heads are carried on showy plumes displayed in abundance from mid fall to mid winter.

Landscape Attributes

National Arboretum Fountain Grass is an 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.

National Arboretum Fountain Grass is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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

Planting & Growing

National Arboretum Fountain Grass will grow to be about 24 inches tall at maturity extending to 3 feet tall with the flowers, with a spread of 4 feet. 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 growing conditions, but will not tolerate any 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 or pH, and is able to handle environmental salt. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This is a selected variety of a species not originally from North America. 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.

National Arboretum Fountain 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.