Western Fescue

Festuca occidentalis



Western Fescue
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Plant Height: 24 inches

Flower Height: 3 feet

Spread: 24 inches

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 4

Description:

A medium-sized bunchgrass with narrow green leaves and flowering culms of yellow in spring to summer; very adaptable to moist or dry conditions; perfect for edging or the rock garden; great for naturalizing in forested and woodland habitats

Ornamental Features

Western Fescue is primarily valued in the garden for its cascading habit of growth. It features delicate panicles of yellow catkins rising above the foliage from mid spring to early summer. Its attractive grassy leaves are green in color. As an added bonus, the foliage turns a gorgeous harvest gold in the fall.

Landscape Attributes

Western Fescue is an herbaceous evergreen 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. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Self-Seeding

Western Fescue is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Rock/Alpine Gardens
- Border Edging
- General Garden Use
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Western Fescue will grow to be about 24 inches tall at maturity extending to 3 feet tall with the flowers, with a spread of 24 inches. Its foliage tends to remain dense right to the ground, not requiring facer plants in front. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 8 years. As an evegreen perennial, this plant will typically keep its form and foliage year-round.

This plant does best in full sun to partial shade. 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. This plant does not require much in the way of fertilizing once established. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This species is native to parts of North America..

Western Fescue 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.