Variegated Giant Reed Grass

Arundo donax 'Variegata'



Variegated Giant Reed Grass foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 12 feet

Spread: 3 feet

Sunlight: ○

Hardiness Zone: 6

Other Names: Spanish Reed

Description:

A reed grass that resembles bamboo or corn, with broadly variegated sword-like leaves that are striped with dark green and white; plant with a root barrier to help contain this spreader; use as a contrasting accent or patio screen

Ornamental Features

Variegated Giant Reed Grass is primarily valued in the landscape or garden for its ornamental upright and spreading habit of growth. It features airy panicles of tan flowers rising above the foliage from late summer to mid fall. Its attractive large sword-like leaves remain bluish-green in color with showy white variegation throughout the season.



Variegated Giant Reed Grass foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Variegated Giant Reed Grass is an herbaceous perennial grass with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its relatively coarse texture can be used to stand it apart from other garden plants with finer foliage.

This is a high maintenance plant that will require regular care and upkeep, and should be cut back in late fall in preparation for winter. Deer don't particularly care for this plant and will usually leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Invasive

Variegated Giant Reed Grass is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- Hedges/Screening
- General Garden Use
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens
- Container Planting



Variegated Giant Reed Grass in spring
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Planting & Growing

Variegated Giant Reed Grass will grow to be about 12 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 3 feet. Its foliage tends to remain dense right to the ground, not requiring facer plants in front. It grows at a fast 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 may require supplemental watering during periods of drought or extended heat. 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, and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. 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.

Variegated Giant Reed Grass is a fine choice for the garden, 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 growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.