
Grasses

grasses and grass-like plants

Acorus

gramineus 'Ogon'

Leaves striped creamy yellow. Incredibly versatile, capable of growing in sun or shade, wet or normal garden soil. Great accent or edging.

Evergreen

gramineus 'Variegatus'

White-variegated variety

Evergreen

Arrhenatherum

elatus bulbosum 'Variegatus'

Very well-mannered little grass to about 8 inches, with bright white-striped foliage.

Deciduous

Arundo

donax

Monstrous grass introduced by the Spaniards. Invasive in California. Don't plant this! Not recommended.

Evergreen

Briza

media

Interesting little grass with attractive flowers that turn into papery seed heads. Well-mannered.

Deciduous

Calamagrostis

x acutiflora 'Karl Foerster'

Very upright growth habit. This has become one of the most popular ornamental grasses due to the tidy growth habit and distinctive narrow upright growth.

Deciduous

x acutiflora 'Overdam'

variegated version

Deciduous

Carex

Sedges

Very diverse group. Some tight little mounds of foliage, others spread as ground covers.

Deciduous

buchananii

stiff, bronzy foliage

Evergreen

***buchananii* 'Viridis'**

corkscrew curls

Evergreen

***comans* 'Frosted Curls'**

1' curly pigtails.

New Zealand hair sedge

Evergreen

dipsacea

green with a bronze tint

Evergreen

flagellifera

1-2' narrow leaves, bronze-tinted.

Sedge

Evergreen

flagellifera

weeping bronzy leaves

Evergreen

***morrowii* 'Ice Dance'**

variegated foliage

Evergreen

subfusca

Narrow dark green in dense clumps. Ca native.

Sedge

Evergreen

Cortaderia

jubata

Dwarfer pampas grass that has colonized much of coastal California by reseeding. Plant is shorter, plumes are pink rather than white. Listed here only to distinguish it from the bigger Pampas grass. Not recommended.

Evergreen

Purple pampas grass

selloana

Fast, big, with dramatic white plumes. Way too big for typical yards. Not recommended. Leaves have razor sharp edges. A related species (*C jubata*) is reseeding all over the coastal areas. This one is less likely to reseed.

Evergreen

Pampas grass

Elymus

***arenarius* 'Glaucus'**

now named *Leymus*

Evergreen

***condensatus* 'Canyon Prince'**

now named Leymus

Blue Wild Rye

Evergreen

Festuca

Some of our most important turf grasses as well as many garden ornamentals. Mostly low growing.

Fescues

Evergreen

***amethystina* 'Superba'**

bigger, more grey than *F. ovina glauca*

Fescue

Evergreen

cinerea

'Azurit' has vivid blue-grey foliage to about 16".

Evergreen

***glauca* 'Elijah Blue'**

bigger, more grey-blue than *F. ovina glauca*

Evergreen

ovina glauca

tufty little grey grass used as accent

Blue or grey fescue

Evergreen

***rubra* 'Jughandle'**

Short, stiff, with chalky blue-green leaves. CA native selection.

Evergreen

Helictotrichon

sempervirens

Gets about 2 feet x 2 feet. Silvery-blue foliage is quite striking. Getting mixed reviews about longevity.

Blue oat grass

Evergreen

***sempervirens* 'Sapphire'**

More blue form.

Evergreen

Imperata

cylindrica rubra

Spreads; can become invasive in wet situations. Attractive red leaves.

Japanese Blood grass

Deciduous

Juncus

effusus 'Spiralis'

1 - 2' with wiry, spiral stems. Good near water features.

Evergreen

Corkscrew rush

Koeleria

glauca

Tidy little grass with blue-grey foliage, good for edging a lawn as you transition to meadow. 1 foot foliage, blooms to 2 feet.

Evergreen

Leymus

arenarius 'Glaucus'

Vigorous, tall, floppy, spreads over a large area.

Evergreen

Blue rye, Lyme grass

condensatus 'Canyon Prince'

Silver-blue foliage (new growth is green). Plant often gets bigger than expected, to as much as 5 feet tall, and spreads steadily to cover a large area. Looks best when watered.

Evergreen

Blue Wild Rye

Miscanthus

Mostly 2 to 4 feet, mounding growers with attractive flower plumes. Some have become invasive elsewhere. Some of the most popular ornamental grasses.

Maiden grasses

Deciduous

'Sarabande'

Deciduous

sinensis 'Adagio'

narrow leaves, rounded growth habit

Maiden grass

Deciduous

sinensis 'Caberet'

vertically striped leaves

Deciduous

sinensis 'Cosmopolitan'

vertically striped leaves

Deciduous

sinensis 'Gracillimus'

thin, elegant leaves

Maiden grass

Deciduous

sinensis 'Variegatus'

Deciduous

sinensis 'Yaku Jima'

pink flowers, golden seed heads, very showy late summer and fall.

Eulalia, Japanese silver grass

Deciduous

sinensis 'Zebrinus'

horizontal gold stripes on the leaves

Zebra grass

Deciduous

transmorrisonensis

Great big grass to four feet across with blooms spikes that sprawl as much as 6 feet. "The best Miscanthus for the West" per John Greenlee, who knows his grasses.

Evergreen Miscanthus

Evergreen

Muhlenbergia

dumosa

Not a bamboo! Very divided leaves and arching habit make a billowing mound. Very graceful.

Bamboo muhly

Evergreen

filipis

Evergreen

rigens

Big, evergreen native grass with shiny foliage. Give it room! But one of the most useful ornamental grasses.

Deer grass

Evergreen

Panicum

virgatum 'Heavy Metal'

Very tall, upright with metallic-blue foliage, yellow fall color.

Switch grass

Deciduous

Pennisetum

alopecuroides 'Hameln'

Short grower, profuse bloom.

Chinese fountain grass

Deciduous

alopecuroides 'Little Bunny'

Nice dwarf fountain grass with compact habit, showy flowers .

Deciduous

alopecuroides 'Moudry'

SWG: "an especially heavy self-seeder."

Deciduous

setaceum

This is the parent species of the red-leaf grasses that have plume flowers. Those are sterile and don't re-seed. This one does and is considered invasive in the Valley. Not recommended.

Deciduous

setaceum 'Bronze Dwarf'

Miniature version of Rubrum.

Deciduous

setaceum 'Cupreum'/'Rubrum'

Purple-red foliage and flower plumes. Dies to ground. Just barely hardy here, sometimes doesn't return in spring.

Deciduous

setaceum 'Eaton Canyon'

Another miniature version of Rubrum.

Deciduous

Phalaris

arundinacea picta 'Feeseey'

Leaves are variegated and tinged with pink. This grass can really spread! Also sold as 'Strawberries'n'Cream'

Deciduous

arundinacea picta 'Woods Dwarf'/'Dwarf Garters'

Leaves are variegated and tinged with pink. Shorter variety.

Deciduous

Schizachyrium

scoparium 'The Blues'

SWG: "formerly known as *Andropogon scoparius*."

Evergreen

Sesleria

autumnalis

Yellow-green foliage to about a foot, showy white flowers in great profusion. Does not seed. Very adaptable. One of the best.

Evergreen

Sporobulus

airoides

Sort of reddish, short native grass that likes moisture.

Evergreen

green Fountain grass

dwarf Red fountain grass

Red fountain grass

Dwarf Red Fountain Grass

Pink ribbon grass

Pink ribbon grass

Autumn moor grass

Alkali sacaton

Stipa

arundinacea

Light orange-gold leaves. Cut back in winter when it looks shaggy. Synonym: *Anemanthele lessoniana*

Deciduous

gigantea

Huge, upright grower to 6 feet with showy plumes

Giant feather grass

Deciduous

gigantea

Huge, dramatic. Foliage to 3 feet, blooms spikes to 8 feet tall.

Giant Stipa

Evergreen

tenuissima

Graceful, wispy perennial grass, now considered invasive. Not recommended.

Mexican feather grass

Deciduous

Thysanolaena

maxima

Very large, dramatic plant with large leaves. Resembles bamboo. Frost kills tops here, but resprouts. Evergreen in coastal areas.

Tiger Grass

Deciduous

Lawns

grasses and grass-like plants

Agrostis

pallens

Fine-bladed turf. CA native grass being used in native grass blends.

Evergreen

seashore bent grass

Bouteloua

dactyloides

Very drought tolerant, low-growing western native grass. Long dormant season (Dec - March) is a drawback. Slow to establish.

Deciduous

buffalograss

Cynodon

dactylon

Tough, drought tolerant, great for wear and tear. Invades locally by fast-spreading rhizomes. Common form in yards is actually sterile, but very persistently regrows from the roots when you try to get rid of it. Brown dormant from Dec to Mar.

Deciduous

bermudagrass

Festuca

arundinacea

The basic lawn grass. Wider leaf blades, taller lawn, tough. Clump grower, so doesn't fill in bare areas on its own; you need to overseed to keep it dense. Good drought recovery. "Dwarf fescues" are just slower-growing varieties of tall fescue.

Evergreen

Tall fescue, dwarf fescue

ovina

Very fine-bladed tufted bunch grass sometimes used in no-mow blends. Very drought tolerant. Ok to mow, but not lower than 3 inches. Tolerant of very low nitrogen.

Evergreen

sheep fescue

rubra subspecies *commutata*

Very fine-bladed grass used in blends for heat and sun tolerance. Nice deep green color, tends to crowd out other grasses in a slightly clumpy manner. Pretty good drought recovery. Can tolerate mowing.

Evergreen

chewings fescue

rubra subspecies *rubra*

Very fine-bladed grass that is soft, dark green, especially lovely when left as an unmowed meadow. Mow high, and not during hot weather. Good drought recovery.

Evergreen

creeping red fescue

trachyphyla

Very fine-bladed grass sometimes used in blends for shade tolerance. Good drought recovery. Old name *Festuca longifolia*, syn. *F. brevipila*.

Evergreen

hard fescue***Lolium***

perenne

Fine-bladed turf. Germinates quickly, great for overseeding. Tough for traffic. Nice shiny green leaf blades. Reasonable drought recovery.

Evergreen

perennial ryegrass***Poa***

pratensis

Fine-bladed turf. The old standard turfgrass. Great color, nice and uniform. Very subject to disease here, so not recommended as a major part of your lawn, but it's often ok as a small percentage of seed or sod blends..

Evergreen

Kentucky bluegrass