Pampas Grass

Cortaderia selloana

Pampas Grass in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Plant Height: 9 feet

Flower Height: 12 feet

Spread: 6 feet

Sunlight: ○

Hardiness Zone: 7

Description:

A popular, durable ornamental grass, producing a large clump of narrow, grassy foliage that arches outward; silvery white plumes tower above the foliage and persist for a long time; tolerates some light shade; considered invasive in some areas

Ornamental Features

Pampas Grass features showy plumes of white flowers with silver overtones rising above the foliage from late summer to late fall. The flowers are excellent for cutting. Its attractive spiny grassy leaves remain green in color throughout the season. The tan seed heads are carried on showy plumes displayed in abundance from late fall to late winter.

Landscape Attributes

Pampas 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 cut back to the ground in late winter before active growth resumes. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Invasive
- Self-Seeding

Pampas Grass is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens
- Container Planting

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Planting & Growing

Pampas Grass will grow to be about 9 feet tall at maturity extending to 12 feet tall with the flowers, with a spread of 6 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 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 should only be grown in full sunlight. It prefers to grow in average to moist conditions, and shouldn't be allowed to dry out. 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. This species is not originally from North America. It can be propagated by division.

Pampas 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.