



Little Bluestem

Schizachyrium scoparium

Plant Height: 24 inches

Flower Height: 32 inches

Spread: 18 inches

Sunlight: ☉

Hardiness Zone: 3a

Other Names: Carousel Bluestem

Description:

This dwarf, clump forming, warm season native features a unique rounded shape and resistance to lodging; blue-green blades with a purplish-bronze bloom; a true kaleidoscope of autumn color

Ornamental Features

Little Bluestem is primarily grown for its highly ornamental fruit. The antique red seed heads are carried on showy plumes displayed in abundance from early fall to late winter. Its attractive grassy leaves are bluish-green in color. As an added bonus, the foliage turns a gorgeous orange in the fall. It has masses of beautiful spikes of deep purple flowers rising above the foliage in late summer, which are most effective when planted in groupings. The brick red stems are very colorful and add to the overall interest of the plant.

Landscape Attributes

Little Bluestem is an herbaceous perennial grass with an upright spreading habit of growth. 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. It is a good choice for attracting birds to your yard. It has no significant negative characteristics.



Little Bluestem
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Little Bluestem
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Little Bluestem is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Groundcover
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Little Bluestem will grow to be about 24 inches tall at maturity extending to 32 inches tall with the flowers, with a spread of 18 inches. 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!



Little Bluestem
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

This plant should only be grown in full sunlight. It prefers to grow in average to dry locations, and dislikes excessive moisture. 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. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is native to parts of our region. It can be propagated by division.

Little Bluestem is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. With its upright habit of growth, it is best suited for use 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.