

Ornamental Grasses Project 2000-2002

Nick Christians and Rodney St. John

Purpose:

The purpose of the ornamental grass project is to evaluate 34 ornamental grasses for their adaptation to Iowa conditions. The study is located south of the turfgrass research building. Grasses 1 and 2 were established in 1989. Grasses 3-5, 11-15, 17-18, 20-21, and 33 were established in 2000. The remaining grasses were established in June of 2001.

Each plot on this site has a 4 x 5 ft spacing. The grasses are located on the south side of the maintenance building at the Turf Research Farm. The grasses descend in height from number one in the center, to 34 on each of the ends. The 34 grasses are replicated twice on the two sides of the arc (Figure 1). The grasses are either cut down or burnt down each spring.

Choosing the species:

Ornamental grasses have numerous characteristics, each that could make a difference in which species is chosen for a particular landscape. For the plots at the Horticulture Research Station, the new species have general characteristics of being bunch type, non-aggressive, varying in color, form and shape, in addition to being able to grow in zones 4 and/or 5.

The grasses will remain in this location for several years. They will be evaluated on their winter survival and overall adaptation to local conditions.

Figure 1. Plot map and layout of the Ornamental Grasses Project.

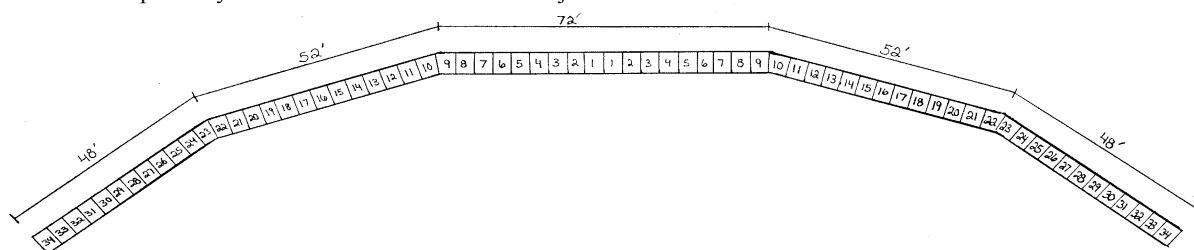


Table 1. Species, common name and expected growing height of the 34 grasses used in the Ornamental Grasses Project.

	<u>Genus Species</u>	<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Expected Growing Height</u>
1	Miscanthus floridulus 'Giganteus'	Giant Chinese Silver Grass	12-15'
2	Miscanthus sinensis	Japanese Silver Grass	8'
3	Miscanthus sinensis 'Strictus'	Porcupine Grass	8'
4	Panicum virgatum 'Cloud Nine'	Switch Grass	8'
5	Miscanthus sinensis 'Graziella'	Japanese Silver Grass	5-6'
6	Miscanthus sinensis 'Silberfeder'	Silver Feather	6-8'
7	Molina caerulea ssp. arundinacea 'Transparent'	Tall Moor Grass	5-7'
8	Molina caerulea ssp. arundinacea 'Skyracer'	Tall Moor Grass	7-8'
9	Molina caerulea ssp. arundinacea 'Windspiel'	Tall Moor Grass	6-7'
10	Molina litorialis 'Fontaene'	Tall Moor Grass	6'
11	Calamagrostis x acutiflora 'Karl Foerster'	Feather Reed Grass	4-5'
12	Miscanthus sinensis 'Variegatus'	Japanese Silver Grass	8'
13	Miscanthus sinensis 'Silberspinne'	Japanese Silver Grass	4-5'
14	Panicum virgatum 'Prairie Sky'	Switch Grass	6'
15	Panicum virgatum 'Heavy Metal'	Switch Grass	3-4'
16	Panicum virgatum	Switch Grass	5'
17	Miscanthus sinensis 'Purpurascens'	Japanese Silver Grass	3-4'
18	Sorghastrum nutans	Indian Grass	3-5'
19	Andropogon gerardii	Big bluestem	5'
20	Calamagrostis arundinacea 'Brachyticha'	Korean Feather Reed Grass	3'
21	Panicum virgatum 'Haense Herms'	Red Switch Grass	4'
22	Panicum virgatum 'Shenandoah'	Red Switch Grass	4'
23	Panicum virgatum 'Rotstrahlbusch'	Red Switch Grass	5'
24	Spodiopogon sibiricus	Siberian graybeard	4'
25	Bouteloua curtipendula	Side-oats grama	3'
26	Molina caerulea 'Karl Foester'	Variegated Purple Moor Grass	6-7'
27	Schizachyrium scoparium 'The Blues'	Little bluestem	2-3'
28	Deschampsia cespitosa 'Bronzeschleier'	Tufted Hair Grass	3'
29	Deschampsia cespitosa 'Goldstaub'	Tufted Hair Grass	2-3'
30	Helictotrichon sempervirens 'Saphiresprudel'	Blue-oat Grass	2-3'
31	Festuca mairei	Atlas Mountain Fescue	2-2.5'
32	Molina litoralis 'Bergfreud'	Tall Moor Grass	5-6'
33	Festuca glauca 'Superba'	Blue Fescue	1-2'
34	Festuca glauca 'Elijah Blue'	Blue Fescue	8"