

The Garden Door: Grass Garden

(To understand the abbreviations, go to the key located at the end of the spreadsheet.)

Botanical Name	Common Name	Variety	Season	Form	Height	Light Condition	Bloom Time	Flower Early	Flower Late	Foliage Early	Foliage Late	Plant Type	Comments
Andropogon gerardii	Big Bluestem		W	UC	T	S	L	Bro	Tan	BluGre	Tan	P	SNUS
Andropogon gerardii	Big Bluestem	Indian Warrior'	W	UC	T	S	L	Pur	Tan	GreBur	Bur-Tan	P	SNUS GBF FC
Arrhenatherum elatius subsp. Bulbosum	Tuber Oat Grass	Varietatum'	C	IS	S	SPS	I			StrL Whi/Gre	StrL WhiGre	P	TGRL CBS
Calamagrostis brachytricha	Korean Feather Reed Grass		W	UAC	M	SPS	L	MauBei	BuffTan	Gre	YelTan	P	FC
Calamagrostis x acutiflora	Feather Reed Grass	Karl Foerster'	C	UNC	T	SPS	M	Mau	Buf	Gre	Gre-Tan	P	SC WI
Calamagrostis x acutiflora	Variiegated Feather Reed Grass	Overdam'	C	UNC	T	SPS	M	Mau	Buf	StrL Whi/Gre	Whi/Gre-Tan	P	TGRL
Carex eburnia	Bristle Leaved Sedge		C	MC	S	PSSh	I			Gre	Gre	P	SNUS
Carex elata	Bowles' Golden Sedge	Aurea'	C	T	S	PSSh	I			Gol	Lim	P	GGF
Carex flacca	Glaucous Sedge	Blue Zinger	C	MS	S	PSSh	I			BluGre		P	GBF
Carex morrowii	Japanese Sedge	Ice Dance'	C	MS	S	PSSh	I			StrL Gre/Whi	StrL Gre/Whi	P	GVF AE
Carex muskingumensis	Palm Sedge		C	MS	S	PSSh	I			Gre		P	
Carex siderosticha	Broad-Leaf Sedge	Banana Boat'	C	MS	S	PSSh	I			StrL Gol/Gre	GolBei	P	
Carex vulpinoides	Fox Sedge		C	T	M	SPS	E	YelGre-Bro		Gre	Gre	P	SNUS SA
Chasmanthium latifolium	Wild Oats (Northern Sea Oats)		W	UOC	M	SPS	M	GreCop	TanBro	Gre	TanBro	P	SNUS
Cotinus coggygia	Purple Smokebush			U	VT	S	M	BurRas	BurRas	DCBur	DCBur	T	NCH RR
Deschampsia cespitosa	Tufted Hair Grass		C	MOC	M	SPS	M	Gre	Buf	Gre	Gre	P	
Deschampsia cespitosa	Gold Pendant Hair Grass	Goldgehange'	C	MOC	S	SPS	M	Yel	Buf	Gre	Gre	P	
Festuca glauca	Blue Fescue	Blauglut'	C	MC	S	S	E	Gre	Buf	SilBlu	SilBluGre	P	GBF AE
Festuca glauca	Blue Fescue	Elijah Blue'	C	MC	S	S	E	Gre	Buf	SilBlu	BluGreTan	P	GBF
Hakonechloa macra	Hacone Grass (Japanese Forest)		W	MSW	M	SPSSh	I			Gre	GreGol	P	
Hakonechloa macra	Golden-Variiegated Hakone Grass	Aureola'	W	MSW	S	SPSSh	I			StrL Gol/Gre	GolGre-GolTan	P	GGF CWIS
Hakonechloa macra	Hakone Grass	All Gold'	W	MSW	S	PSSh	I			Gol	Gol-GolTan	P	GGF
Helictotrichon sempervirens	Blue Oat Grass		C	MUOC	M	SPS	E	Gre	Buf	SilBlu	SilBlu	P	AE GBF
Imperata cylindrical var. koenigii	Japanese Blood Grass	Red Baron'	W	UIS	S	S	I			Red/Gre	Red-BurBro	P	GRF
Koleria glauca	Blue Hair Grass		C	MUC	S	S	E	GreWhi	Tan	BluGre	BluGre	P	
Luzula sylvatica	Greater Wood Rush	Solar Flair'		MS	S	PsSh	I			YelGre	Gol	P	
Miscanthus 'Purpurascens'	Flame Grass		W	UOC	T	S	L	SilMau-Whi	SalBei	Gre	RedBOGol-SalTan	P	FC WI
Miscanthus sinensis	Japanese Silver Grass	Big Blue'	W	UOC	VT	S	VL	SilCop	SilGra-Buf	StrL Gre/Whi	GolTan-BufTan	P	FC
Miscanthus sinensis	Japanese Silver Grass	Blutenwunder'	W	UAC	T	S	L	SilRas	BufTan	StrL Gre/Whi	Tan	P	
Miscanthus sinensis	Japanese Silver Grass	Ferner Osten'	W	UOC	T	S	L	SilRas	SilBeiTan	StrL Gre/Whi	GreGolBur-PinBeiTan	P	FC
Miscanthus sinensis	Japanese Silver Grass	Goliath'	W	UOC	VT	S	L	SilRas	GraBei	StrL Gre/Whi	GolTan	P	RBG
Miscanthus sinensis	Japanese Silver Grass (Maiden)	Gracillimus'	W	UAC	T	S	L	SilRas	SilGraTan-GraPinTan	StrL Gre/Whi	GreBur-PinTan	P	FC
Miscanthus sinensis	Japanese Silver Grass	Graziella'	W	UOC	T	S	L	Sil-Whi	Bei	StrL Gre/Whi	GreBurGol-Tan	P	
Miscanthus sinensis	Japanese Silver Grass	Huron Sunrise'	W	UOC	T	S	L	SilBu	SilBurGra- BuffTan	StrL Gre/Whi	GreBur-BufTan	P	FC
Miscanthus sinensis	Japanese Silver Grass	Kline Fontaine'	W	UOC	T	S	L	SilPin-Whi	Bei			P	
Miscanthus sinensis	Japanese Silver Grass	Morning Light'	W	UAC	T	S	L	SilRas	SilGra	StrL Gre/Whi	GreWhiBur-TanGreBur	P	NCH WTR FC
Miscanthus sinensis	Japanese Silver Grass	Oktoberfest'	W	UOC	T	S	VL	SilRas	SilGra	StrL Gre/Whi	GreBO-TanBro	P	
Miscanthus sinensis	Japanese Silver Grass	Silberfeder'	W	UAC	VT	S	L	PC	BeiTan	StrL GreWhi	BeiTan	P	RBG FC WI

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Miscanthus sinensis	Japanese Silver Grass (Porcupine)	Strictus'	W	UOC	T	S	VL	SilPin	SilGra	StrH Gre/Yel	Gre/Yel-Tan	P	GVF
Miscanthus sinensis	Japanese Silver Grass	Variegatus'	W	UAC	T	S	VL	SilRas	SilGra-GraTan	StrL Whi/Gre	WhiGre-Tan	P	GVF
Molinia caerulea	Purple Moor Grass	Moorflamme'	C	UAC	T	S	L	CreTanMau	GolTan	Gre	GolTan	P	
Molinia caerulea subsp. arundinacea	Tall Purple Moor Grass	Skyracer'	C	UAC	T	S	L	Gre-Tan	Buf	Gre	Gol	P	STF FC
Panicum virgatum	Switch Grass	Dallas Blues'	W	UOC	T	S	VL	Gre-Tan	Tan	BluGre	TanBro	P	SNUS NCH WTR GBF
Panicum virgatum	Switch Grass	Heavy Metal'	W	UOC	M	S	M	GreBeiMau	BeiTan	BluGre	Yel-Tan	P	SNUS
Panicum virgatum	Switch Grass	Northwind'	W	UNC	M	S	M	GreBei	Buf	Gre	Buf	P	SNUS
Panicum virgatum	Switch Grass	Rotstrahlbusch'	W	UOC	M	S	M	GreBeiBur	Bur-Tan	Gre	GreBur-MauTan	P	SNUS GBUF
Panicum virgatum	Switch Grass	Shenandoah'	W	UOC	M	S	M	GreMau	Tan	Gre	GreBur-BurTan	P	SNUS GBUF
Pennisetum alopecuroides	Fountain Grass		W	UAC	M	S	M	MauGre-Tan	PinGra-Bei	Gre	GolTan	P	SC FC
Saccarum ravennae	Ravenna Grass (Hardy Pampas)		W	UC	VT	S	VL	SilPin	SilGra-GraTan	Gre	BeiTanRed	P	NCH WTR RBG WI
Schizachyrium scoparium	Little Bluestem	Blaze'	W	UC	M	S	M	BurTan	PinBeiTan	BluGre-BurTan	PinBeiTan	P	SNUF TTF FC SC
Schizachyrium scoparium	Little Bluestem	Blue Heaven'	W	UC	M	S	M	BluBur	BurTan-Cop	BluGre-BluBur	BurTan-Cop	P	SNUS RU FC SC WI
Schizachyrium scoparium	Little Bluestem	Prairie Blues'	W	UC	M	S	M	BluMau	Pin-PinTan	BluGre-BluMau	Pin-PinTan	P	SNUS TTF FC SC
Schizachyrium scoparium	Little Bluestem	The Blues	W	UC	M	S	M	Blu	PinBlu-CopTan	BluGre-Blu	PinBlu-CopTan	P	SNUS TTF FC SC
Seslaria autumnalis	Autumn Moor Grass		C	M	S	SPS	L	Bei	Tan	Gre	Gre	P	
Seslaria caerulea	Blue Moor Grass		C	M	S	SPS	E	Pur		Gre/Blu	Gre/Blu	P	OSGOSB AE
Seslaria huefnerina	Blue-Green Moor Grass		C	M	S	SPS	E	BlaCre		Gre	Gre	P	
Sorghastrum nutans	Indian Grass		W	UC	T	S	L	BroYel	Tan	Gre	Tan	P	SNUS
Sorghastrum nutans	Indian Grass		W	UC	T	S	L	CopBroYel	Tan	BluGre	Tan	P	SNUS
Spodiopogon sibericus	Siberian Graybeard		W	UOC	M	SPS	M	GreTan	Tan	Gre-GreYel	TanBro	P	
Sporobolus heterolepis	Prairie Dropseed		W	MAC	M	SPS	L	PinBei	Tan	Gre	GolTan-Tan	P	SNUS
Thuja occidentalis	Arborvitae	Techny'		UO	VT	SPS				Gre	Gre	T	

Eliminated from Grass Garden

Carex oshimensis	Japanese Sedge	EverColor Everest'											NCH
Carex oshimensis	Japanese Sedge	Evergold'											NCH
Carex pensylvanica	Pennsylvania Sedge												NSO
Euonymus alatus	Burning Bush												LRI
Leymus arenarius	Blue Lyme Grass												LRI
Pennisetum alopecuroides	Fountain Grass	Hameln											NCH
Pennisetum alopecuroides	Fountain Grass	Little Bunny											NCH
Phalaris arundinacea	Ribbon Grass	Picta											LRI
Phalaris arundinacea	Ribbon Grass	Feeseys'											LRI

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Key to Abbreviations

C = cool season W = warm season	A = arching	S = 0-2'	S = sun	E = early	Bei = beige	Bei = beige	Bei = beige	Bei = beige	Bei = beige	Bei = beige	Bei = beige	P = perennial	AE = almost evergreen
I = irregular	C = clump-forming	M = 2-5'	PS = part sun	M = mid	Blu = blue	Blu = blue	Blu = blue	Blu = blue	Blu = blue	Blu = blue	Blu = blue	S = shrub	CBS = can be sheared CWIS = cream white in sun
M = mound	I = irregular	T = 5-7'	Sh = shade	L = late	Bro = brown	bro = brown	BO = burnt orange	BO = burnt orange	BO = burnt orange	BO = burnt orange	BO = burnt orange	T = tree	FC = fall color
N = narrow	M = mound	VT = >7'		VL = very late	Buf = buff	Buf = buff	Bro = brown	Bro = brown	Bro = brown	Bro = brown	Bro = brown		GBF = good blue foliage
O = open	N = narrow			I = insignificant	Bur = burgundy	Bur = burgundy	Cop = copper	Cop = copper	Bur = burgundy	Bur = burgundy	Bur = burgundy		GBuF = good burgundy foliage
S = spreading	O = open				Gra = gray	DC = dark chocolate	Cre = cream DC = dark chocolate	Cre = cream DC = dark chocolate	Bur = burgundy	Bur = burgundy	Bur = burgundy		GGF = good gold foliage
U = upright W = weeping	S = spreading				Mau = mauve	Gol = gold	chocolate	chocolate	Cop = copper DC = dark chocolate	Cop = copper DC = dark chocolate	Cop = copper DC = dark chocolate		GRF = good red foliage
	U = upright W = weeping				Pin = pink PC = pink champaign Pur = purple Ras = raspberry	Gra = gray	Gol = gold	Gol = gold	Gra = gray Gre = green	Gra = gray Gre = green	Gre = green Mau = mauve		GVF = good variegated foliage
					Sil = silver Tan = tan TBD = to be determined Whi = white Yel = yellow	Sal = salmon Tan = tan	Mau = mauve Red = red	Mau = mauve Red = red	Lim = lime	Lim = lime	Pin = pink		LRI = listed restrictive invasive NCH = not completely hardy NSO = not sufficiently ornamental OSGOSB = one side green, one side blue RBG = really big grass
							Sal = salmon Sil = silver StrH = striped horizontally StrL = striped longitudinally Tan = tan	Sal = salmon Sil = silver StrH = striped horizontally StrL = striped longitudinally Tan = tan	Sal = salmon Sil = silver	Sal = salmon Sil = silver	Sal = salmon Sil = silver		RR = regrows readily RU = remains upright
							Whi = white Yel = yellow	Whi = white Yel = yellow	Whi = white	Whi = white	Whi = white		SA = spreads aggressively
													SC = summer color SNUS = species native to U.S.
													STF = see-through fan TGRL = tends to get ratty late TTF = tends to flop WI = winter interest WTR = Worth the risk

Notes Regarding Descriptions:

It is difficult to describe grasses accurately, and this plant list is definitely a work in progress. For one thing, the color and shape of grasses tend to change, often dramatically, over time. The conditions in a particular site can have a major impact on the appearance of grasses as can the weather conditions year to year. Another difficulty is that the color of grasses is often the result of a combination of colors which can be in the form of a mix of colors or in distinctly separate areas of color. The viewer's impression of a grass's color can thus vary greatly depending on whether the viewer is close or distant. This results in a dilemma - whether to describe the component colors of a grass or the overall impression of a grass's color. (To some extent, as described here, this document attempts to split the difference.) Another factor that can substantially affect the viewer's perception of a grass's color, particularly in the fall (when the pallet consists mainly of white, beige, buff, tan and gray), is the quality of light. These shades can appear very different on a sunny day vs. a cloudy day, or in bright sunlight vs. the soft golden light of late afternoon. How the component colors of a grass are presented in this document is significant. A mix of colors is indicated by a run-on e.g. BluGre. Separate areas of color are indicated by a diagonal, e.g. Gre/Whi. With respect both to mixes of color and to separate areas of color, the color that appears first in the description tends to control the overall impression of color. For example, a grass described as Whi/Gre will have a whitish appearance. A change of color over time is indicated by a hyphen, e.g. Yel-Tan. Finally, this form, which focuses on flowers and foliage doesn't work as well for grasses as well as it does for perennial flowers. Stems don't neatly fit in either category, but stems constitute a major part of many grasses, both in terms of structure and color impact. This document tends to attribute stems in the vicinity of foliage to the foliage category and stems above the foliage and/or in the vicinity of flowers to the flower category.

Suggested Reading

Rick Darke, *The Color Encyclopedia of Ornamental Grasses*, Timber Press (1999)

Mary Hockenberry Meyer, *Ornamental Grasses for Cold Climates*, 3rd ed., University of Minnesota Extension (2012) (Available from the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum Online Gift Store)

Neil Lucas, *Designing with Grasses*, Timber Press (2011)