

Crinkled Hairgrass

Deschampsia flexuosa

(dess-CHAMP-see-ah flex-uu-O-sah)

Zone 4; 18" tall with gold or purplish panicles on tall, 2' thin stems that twist in late summer; prefers partial shade and moist soil; mounded habit.

Cultivar 'Aurea' has golden spring foliage.



Little Bluestem

Schizachyrium scoparium

(skih-ZAK-ree-um sko-PAY-ree-um)

Cultivar: 'The Blues'

Zone 3; full sun; 2-3' tall when in bloom, 1-2' wide; tolerates moist to dry soil; dense, compact, upright, blue-tinted foliage turns russet in fall; purple to bronze blooms.



Switchgrass

Panicum virgatum

(PAN-ih-kum vur-GOT-um)

Cultivar: 'Shenandoah'

Zone 4; full sun; 2-3' tall; 2' wide; tolerates poor soil and drought; small red flowers on long panicles; red fall foliage; provides seeds for song birds.

Cultivar: 'Northwind'

Zone 4; full sun; 4-5' tall; 3' wide; tolerates poor soil and drought;

vigorous growth; narrow, erect plumes in fall remain upright through winter.

Cultivar: 'Heavy Metal'

Zone 4; full sun; 5'tall, 3' wide; tolerates moist soil; stiff, upright, bluish foliage turns yellow in fall.



Big Bluestem

Andropogon gerardii

(an-dro-PO-gon jur-AR-dee)

Zone 3; full sun; 3' clumps, leafy at base; 6-7' flower stalks resemble turkey feed; adapts to most soil and pH conditions; good nesting habitat; leaves turn bronze in autumn.



Tufted Hairgrass

Deschampsia caespitosa

(dess-CHAMP-see-ah kess-pi-TOH-sah)

Cultivar: 'Northern Lights'

Zone 4; 12" long, narrow leaf blades, spreads 12-15"; full sun or partial shade; clump-forming; colorful variegated green, white, gold and pinkish-red blades; good for smaller landscape areas.



Indian Grass

Sorghastrum nutans

(sor-GAS-trum NYOO-tanz)

Zone 3; sun/partial sun; 3-5' tall, dense clumps; tolerates moist to dry soil and acid to alkaline pH; plume-like golden brown panicles. Cultivar 'Sioux Blue' has waxy blue foliage



Prairie Dropseed

Sporobolus heterolepis

(spor-uh-BOH-lus het-ur-o-LEP-sis)

Zone 3; full sun; 3' tall; well-drained to dry soil; dense, fine-textured, upright, arching mound, medium green thread-like leaves.



Northern Sea Oats

Chasmanthium latifolium

(kas-MAN-thee-um lah-tih-FO-lee-um)

Zone 4 3' stems with 10" clusters resembling oats; prefers sun but adapts to shade; drought and salt tolerant; flower heads persist through winter providing a seed source for birds, or can be cut and dried for ornamental use; self-sowing



What is a native plant? There are many definitions, however most botanists would probably agree that native means plants growing in North America prior to European settlement. Because a plant is native does not mean it is problem-free! Native plants grown in a non-native environment and lacking competitors/predators may become invasive.

With the exception of the native Crinkled Hairgrass, which is a cool season grass, all others in this brochure are warm season. Cool season grasses produce shoot and root growth when temperatures are between 55 and 65 degrees. As such they will emerge and produce bloom much earlier in the season than warm season grasses and go into a dormant state during dry, hot weather. Conversely, warm season grasses require higher temperatures for growth and will emerge much later (late May or June) and produce blooms in early to late fall.



We have identified plants that will grow well, are hardy for zones 3-4 and are low maintenance. As always, remember that careful site selection, planning and care will ensure success and are the key to minimal care and beautiful gardens. The principle of using the **Right Plant** in the **Right Place** applies here!

We welcome all of your gardening questions! Please feel free to contact Cornell Cooperative Extension as noted on the back page and ... Happy Gardening!

References

Native Plants of the Northeast by Donald Leopold, 2005.

The Color Encyclopedia of Ornamental Grasses: Sedges, Rushes, Restios, Cat Tails and selected Bamboos by Rick Darke.

Manual of Grasses of the United States. USDA Miscellaneous Publication no. 200

For more information concerning items in this brochure or other gardening questions, please contact Cornell Cooperative Extension:

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and employment opportunities.*



NATIVE ORNAMENTAL GRASSES FOR THE NORTH COUNTRY

CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
CLINTON COUNTY



Panicum virgatum 'Prairie Fire'
Switchgrass

*With special appreciation to Pat Macomber
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plants inspired the creation of this brochure.*



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