

SOME OF THE BEST ORNAMENTAL GRASSES FOR PARKER COUNTY

Parker County Master Gardener Contributors

Gay, Grenetta and La Donna

Gay:

Japanese silver grass
(Maiden grass)
'Gracillimus' *Miscanthus sinensis*
(Because of the beautiful plumes
in winter).

A tall bunchgrass, to 7 feet, ascending, medium, narrow green foliage with a white midrib, topped by red heads, fading to sandy in winter but still a robust screen or standout. Likes full sun, well drained but moist soil, hardy to zone 5. Cut back to 6 inches in February.

'Hameln' *Pennisetum alopecuroides*
(Because of the compactness and ability to grow in perennial beds It is small in size and is late to bloom, around mid August).

A short, green bunchgrass, to 2.5 feet, producing creamy white bottlebrush heads from midsummer to frost. Needs well-drained soils in full sun, hardy to zone 6. Holds character well in winter. Cut back to 3-5 inches in February.



Grenetta says 'Hameln' grass is also a favorite of hers and the picture is from her landscape. She has also used it in containers and enjoys the look

Gay also likes Ruby grass:

Ruby grass *Melinis nerviglumis*
(Because of its rose colored plumes and its short stature)

A short grass that is excellent in beds, borders and containers. It grows 8-12 inches in height. should be spaced about 10-16 inches apart and planted in sun or partial shade. It is a small, showy grass with narrow, silky, ruby-pink blooms in late spring. It is winter tender here (zone 9-11) so should be planted in protected area by home or under trees. I lost some last year (winter of 2005) three in eight came back but it is beautiful and is worth a try. Cut back to 3-5 inches in February.



The picture of the ruby grass is at the Community Center in Aledo

Grenetta and La Donna also like:

Mexican feather grass
Nassella tenuissima

A very fine textured bunchgrass with an arching growth habit. Forms a golden head in late summer. Very drought tolerant. Never cut back Mexican feather grass the way we do with the other grasses in February. In December, get a rake and comb through the grass...this takes out the dead stuff.

La Donna also likes:

Zebra grass
Miscanthus sinensis
'Zebrinus'

A fast growing clump of dark green leaves marked with yellow to white horizontal bands across ½ inch wide green leaves. Cut grass back to 5-6 inches in February.

These are only a few of the wonderful ornamental grasses that can add beauty to your Parker County landscape. You may find more information about these and others in **the real dirt: A Gardening Handbook for Parker County**. An entire chapter has been devoted to these quality plants.

For more about the real dirt:

<http://www.pcmg-texas.org/therealdirt.htm>