

Grasses & Sedges from the Ground Cover Up



Shannon Currey
Marketing Director

UGA Landscape Planning Short Course
February 7, 2018





What We Grow



Prime Time for Grasses & Sedges

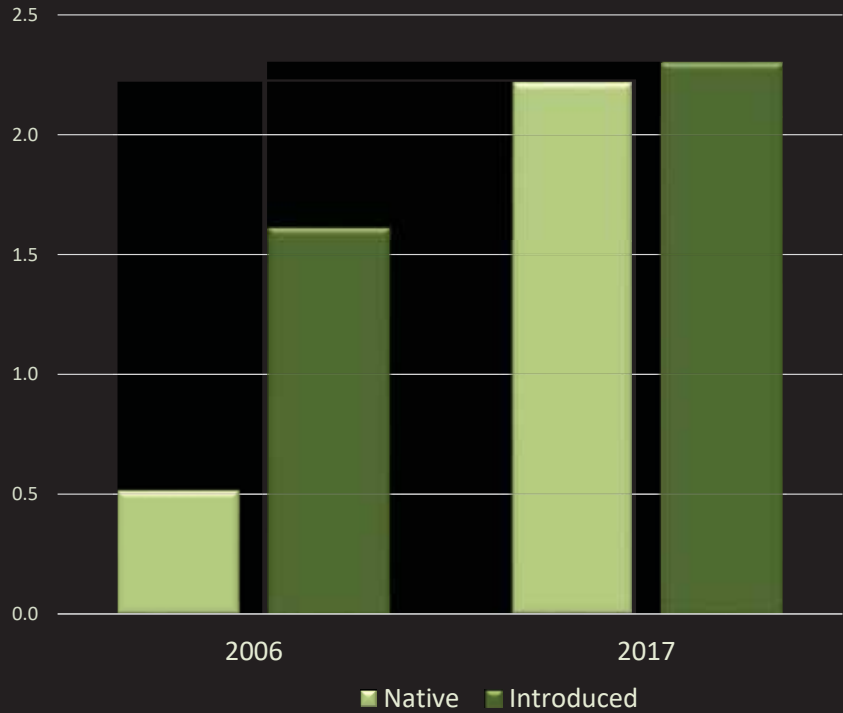
- Popularity of native plants
- Move toward green infrastructure and sustainable landscapes
- Progressive planting design



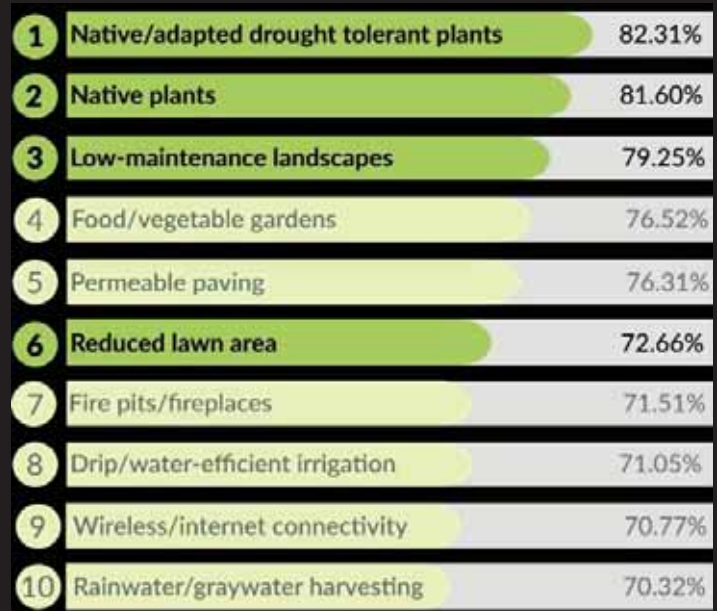
Carex eburnea and *Sesleria autumnalis* on the High Line, NYC

Native Interest

Total # of plants sold



Residential Landscape Architecture Trends



American Society of Landscape Architects,
2017 Residential Landscape Architecture Trends Survey

Plants aren't just pretty...

Economic, Environmental, and Health Benefits



Reduced stormwater runoff

Reduced street repairs

Improved memory & concentration

"Economic, Environmental, and Health/Well-Being Benefits Associated with Green Industry Products and Services: A Review"
(Journal of Environmental Horticulture 29(2):96-103).

Doing More with Grasses & Sedges

- Require few inputs
- Help suppress weeds
- Support wildlife, including pollinators
- Slow storm water, increase infiltration, and store carbon
- Prevent erosion



“Green Infrastructure

uses vegetation, soils, and natural processes to manage water and create healthier urban environments.”

-US EPA

Adding ecological function to new and existing development



North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC
Photo credit: Jon Blasco



The managed urban landscape is green infrastructure.



North Carolina Stormwater Design Manual

Bioretention Plant List



8



22



26

2018

2015

North Carolina Stormwater Design Manual

Bioretention Plant List

2015

Carex spp.



2018

Carex amphibola

Carex cherokeensis

Carex comosa

Carex crinita

Carex grayi

Carex lupulina

Carex lurida

Carex muskingumensis

Carex radiata

Carex rosea

Carex squarrosa

Carex stricta

Carex vulpinoidea

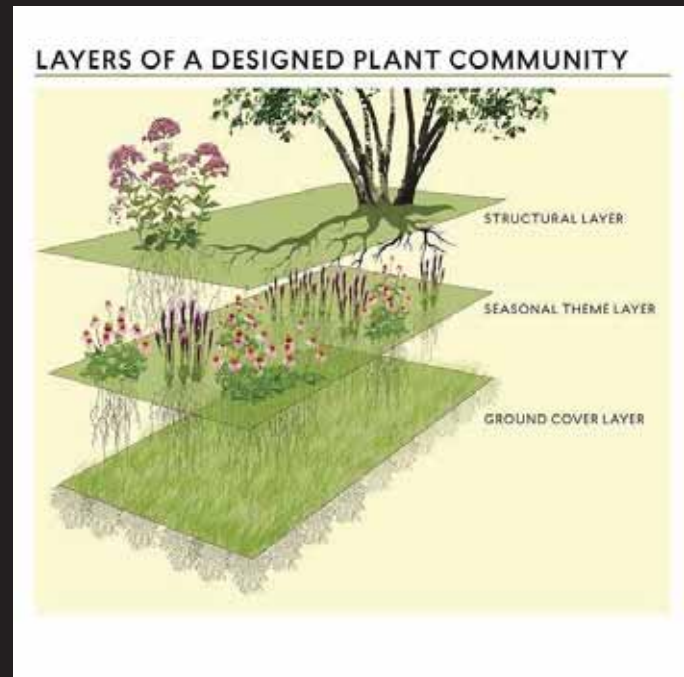
Carex glaucescens

Carex intumescens

+ Stormwater wetlands, infiltration basins

Progressive Planting Design

- Focus on plant community
- Dense, layered
- Stable plantings that use fewer resources and add function
- Biodiversity and resilience



Source: *Planting in a Post-Wild World*, Rainer & West, 2015, Timber Press
Courtesy of Thomas Rainer



The High Line, New York City



Rose Kennedy Greenway, Boston



Indianapolis Museum of Art



Private Estate, Orange Co., NC

Photo: Meadowsweet Gardens



Midtown Sky Garden, New York City

Design by HMWhite Site Architects; photo by Aaron Booher, courtesy of Thomas Rainer



Bioretention Planter in Lancaster, PA

Design and photo by Claudia West, photo courtesy of Thomas Rainer

St. Louis, MO



Versatile and adaptable

WORKING WITH GRASSES & SEDGES



True Grasses

- *Poaceae*
- Widest distribution of all flowering plant families
- Adapted to survive in extreme conditions
- Highly efficient, fibrous root systems
- Many maintain their habit when dormant



Sedges

- Mostly in the genus *Carex*
- Distributed throughout the world
- Groups from North America, Asia, and New Zealand
- Fibrous roots systems
- Range from shade loving to sun tolerant



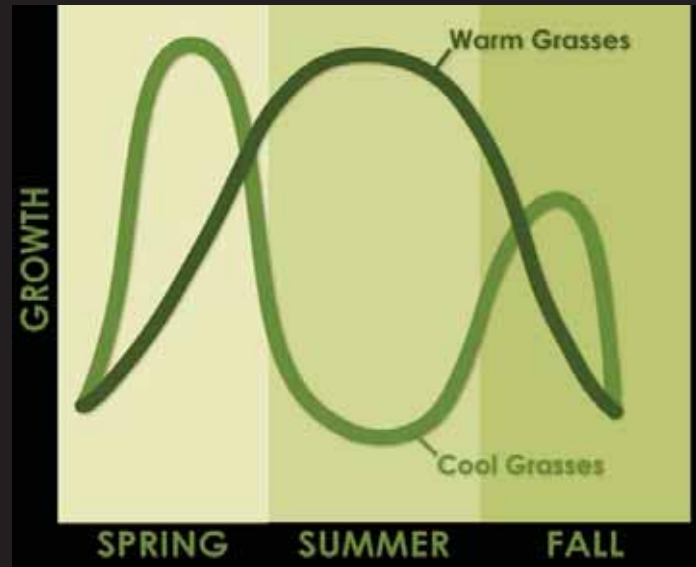
How They Grow

Cool Season

- Moderate to high water & nutrient needs
- Utilize 15-30% of sunlight
- Establish rapidly

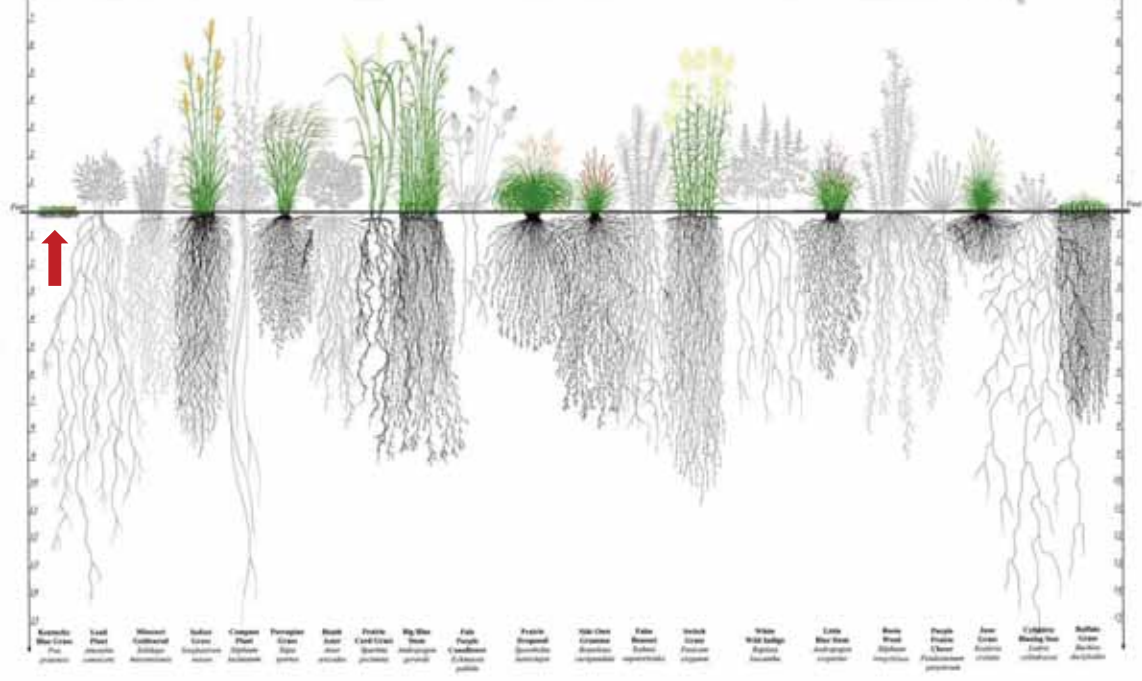
Warm Season

- Use water and nutrients more efficiently
- Utilize 80% of sunlight
- Initial energy in root growth



Root Systems of Prairie Plants

Conservation Research Institute



Grasses Improve Soil

- Improve drainage
- Thick crowns and/or rhizomatous growth
- Prevent erosion
- Continue to function during dormancy
- Store carbon





Working with the Soil

- Tolerant of low fertility
- Adaptable to wide pH range
- Often don't need amendments
- Many grasses need good drainage, especially in winter



Planting

- Soil prep depends on species
- Plant at soil level
- Irrigation to establish
- Avoid late season planting with selected warm season grasses...





Muhlenbergia capillaris



*Pennisetum
alopecuroides* cvs.



Sporobolus heterolepis

Water Use

- Many warm season grasses use water very efficiently
- Minimize use, but readily take up water when present
- Sedge species have a wide range
- Excellent plants for storm water management



Photo: Stephen H. Blake, P. E., Artifex Environmental Design, Inc.



Bioretention Pond at North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, NC
Photo credit: Stephen H. Blake, P.E., Artifex Environmental Design, Inc.

Building a Community

- Nectar and pollen source, larval host for some pollinators
- Cover that allows for movement and foraging
- Nesting material, nesting sites, and food for birds and small mammals
- Deer tend to avoid them!



Photo courtesy of Rocky Cooper

Short To-do List

- For many, no need for fertilization
- Mostly pest- and disease-free
- Cut back grasses once yearly in late winter
- With sedges cut back only if necessary for looks



Building a foundation

COVERING THE GROUND



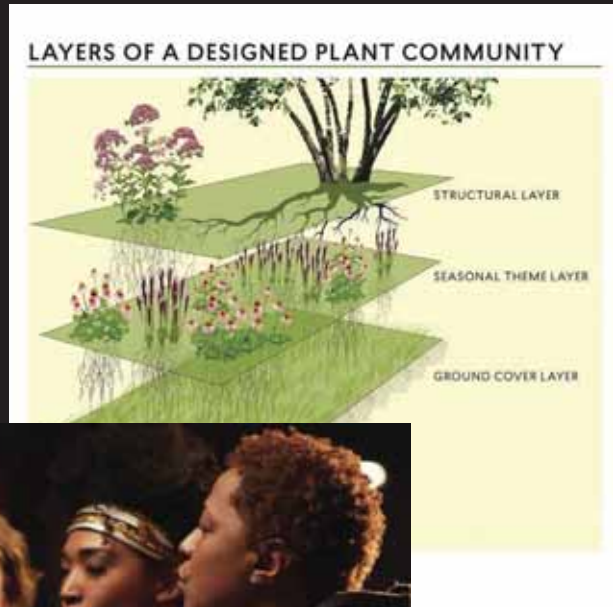
Ground covers & Lawn Alternatives

- Larger sweeps of same plant
- Ground cover more variable in visual texture
- Lawn alternative more uniform
 - Tolerate mowing 2-3 times per year
 - Some handle light foot traffic



Planting Matrix

- Base layer of a more complex planting
- May include other ground-level species
- Plant taller species into base layer
- Building plant community





The High Line, NYC
Photos courtesy of
Pat Cullina





Carex divulsa
Grassland Sedge

- ✓ Thrives under established trees
- ✓ Tolerates range of soil conditions
- ✓ Handles heat and humidity well
- ✓ One of the best for dry shade





Carex pensylvanica
Pennsylvania Sedge

- ✓ Well-behaved spreader
- ✓ Creates fine-textured, lush ground cover
- ✓ No foot traffic
- ✓ Semi-evergreen in mild climates

C. pensylvanica



C. pennsylvanica



Photo: Gregg Hudspeth



Carex texensis Texas Sedge

- ✓ Long, fine-textured foliage
- ✓ Tolerates some foot traffic
- ✓ Drought tolerant



Carex cherokeensis
Cherokee Sedge

- ✓ Medium-textured foliage
- ✓ Evergreen in mild climates
- ✓ Highly deer resistant
- ✓ Pendulous seed spikes on tall scapes
- ✓ Reseeds heavily



C. cherokeensis



Eragrostis spectabilis
Purple Love Grass

- ✓ Airy, pinkish seed heads float above foliage
- ✓ Does best in dry, open areas in full sun
- ✓ Handles dry conditions







Bouteloua gracilis
Blue Grama

- ✓ Appealing seed heads
- ✓ Low-resource lawn alternative; can tolerate light foot traffic
- ✓ Tolerates poor soil, full sun, dry conditions
- ✓ Underused native grass





Carex oshimensis
EverColor® Series

- ✓ Lush, arching habit
- ✓ Strong growers
- ✓ Perform well in shade conditions
- ✓ Evergreen where hardy



Everest

Carex oshimensis
EverColor® Series



'Eversheen'

'Everillo'



'Everlime'



Carex oshimensis EverColor® Series



Photo courtesy of Sarah Reeves





***Carex flacca* and
C. flacca 'Blue Zinger'
Blue Sedge**

- ✓ Widely adaptable
- ✓ Drought tolerant once established
- ✓ Well-behaved spreader





Building patterns and seasonality

THE MIDDLE





Sporobolus heterolepis
Prairie Dropseed

- ✓ Drought-tolerant
- ✓ Beautiful fall color
- ✓ Fall aroma resembling cilantro or popcorn
- ✓ With fall planting, give time to establish

Glenwood Gardens Park, Woodlawn, Ohio
Photo credit: Ben Ackerley





Bouteloua gracilis
'Blonde Ambition' PP22048
Blue Grama

- ✓ Tough, adaptable
- ✓ Tolerates poor soil and drought
- ✓ Abundant seed heads
- ✓ Long-lasting attractiveness





North Carolina Museum of Art
Raleigh, NC



Eragrostis eliottii
'Wind Dancer'
Wind Dancer Love Grass

- ✓ Blue green foliage and airy seed heads
- ✓ Excellent for erosion control
- ✓ Tolerates dry conditions once established
- ✓ Does well in sandy soil





Pennisetum orientale
'Karley Rose' PP12909

Oriental Fountain Grass

- ✓ Drought tolerant
- ✓ Long-lasting, soft pink plumes
(from June to Fall)
- ✓ Easy maintenance



Little Bluestem:
Schizachyrium scoparium cvs.

- Native bunchgrass of prairies and open woods in North America
- Tolerates a wide range of soil conditions (but not wet)
- Supports birds, small mammals, and pollinators





Schizachyrium scoparium
'The Blues'

- ✓ Bright blue foliage with pink highlights
- ✓ Outstanding fall color
- ✓ Stunning in broad sweeps or masses



June



August



September



October



December

'The Blues'



Schizachyrium scoparium
'Standing Ovation' PP25202

- ✓ Green-blue-purple foliage
- ✓ Stands upright; no flopping
- ✓ Thick blades
- ✓ Brilliant oranges and reds in fall



Schizachyrium scoparium
'Twilight Zone' PP27432

- ✓ Full, upright columnar shape
- ✓ Pastel tones that develop bright purple highlights in fall
- ✓ Unique, iridescent foliage

Building structure with height and form

GOING BIGGER





Muhlenbergia capillaris
Pink Muhly Grass

- ✓ Vibrant, pink plumes
- ✓ Heat and drought tolerant
- ✓ Plant no later than early fall for best overwintering
- ✓ Attracts beneficial insects, and clumping habit good wildlife cover



Muhlenbergia capillaris

'White Cloud'

White Cloud Muhly Grass

- ✓ Dense, white plumes
- ✓ Heat and drought tolerant
- ✓ Plant no later than early fall for best overwintering
- ✓ More upright, blooms later than Pink Muhly Grass



Switchgrass:

Panicum virgatum & cvs.

- North American native
- Heat and drought tolerant
- Adapt to a wide variety of conditions
- Provide nesting, cover, and food for birds and small mammals







Panicum virgatum
'Thundercloud' PP20665

- ✓ Upright, arching habit
- ✓ Maintains shape
- ✓ Brings height and statuesque look



Photo courtesy North Creek Nurseries

Panicum virgatum
'Cape Breeze' PP24895

- ✓ Compact cultivar
- ✓ Stays green longer into fall
- ✓ Salt tolerant
- ✓ Heavy bloom set



Panicum virgatum
'Purple Tears' PP28518

- ✓ New introduction from Piet Oudolf
- ✓ Flowering spikes with soft gray color at the top
- ✓ Splendid, purple seed heads
- ✓ 4' height and narrow, upright habit

New!

Panicum virgatum
'Purple Tears' PP28518





Panicum virgatum
'Summer Sunrise'

- ✓ Upright, compact habit (4.5')
- ✓ Cloud of soft-pink seed heads
- ✓ Arching foliage and slightly wider blade

New!



Andropogon gerardii

Big Bluestem

- ✓ Drought tolerant
- ✓ Does well in low fertility soils
- ✓ Interesting “turkey foot” seed heads
- ✓ Shelter for nesting birds and food for songbirds





Sorghastrum nutans

'Indian Steel'

Blue Indian Grass

- ✓ Blue-green foliage
- ✓ Drought tolerant prairie grass
- ✓ Intricate flower structures
- ✓ Bunch grass with tall blooms



And a little something extra...

WHAT'S NEW?





Panicum virgatum
'Purple Tears' PP28518



Panicum virgatum
'Summer Sunrise'



Carex scaposa
Cherry Blossom Sedge

- ✓ Bright pink flowers
- ✓ Repeat bloomer—spring and fall
- ✓ Wide, deep green foliage
- ✓ Collected in China by USNA



Pennisetum alopecuroides
Lumen Gold ('JS Jommenik') PP27435
Lumen Gold Fountain Grass

- ✓ Fountain grass look with bright gold foliage
- ✓ Similar to 'Hameln'
- ✓ Pop of color in spring
- ✓ Transitions to lime green by early summer

Others in the Pipeline

- Smaller, more compact
Andropogon ternarius
- Hardier Muhly Grass—
Muhlenbergia reverchonii
- *Andropogon gerardii* 'Blackhawks'
- Little Bluestems from UGA
- More native sedges

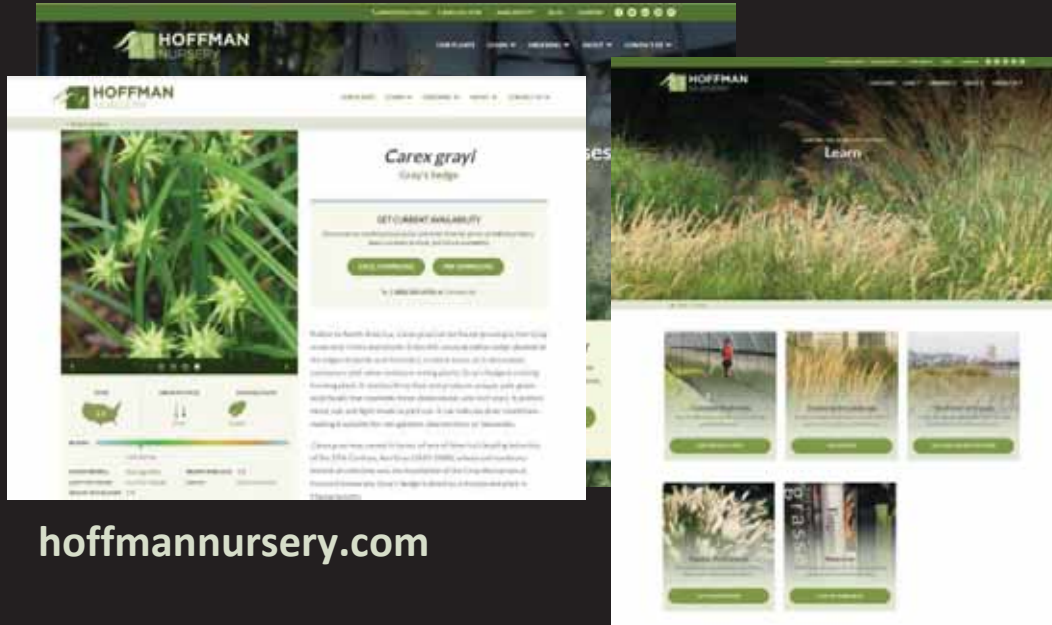


Learn and do more

RESOURCES



Hoffman Nursery Website



hoffmannursery.com

Current Availability

The image shows a screenshot of the Hoffman Nursery website. The background is a lush field of tall, golden-brown grasses. At the top, there is a green navigation bar with the Hoffman Nursery logo on the left and several menu items on the right: "OUR PLANTS", "LEARN", "ORDERING", "ABOUT", and "CONTACT US". A red circle highlights the "CURRENT AVAILABILITY" link in the top navigation bar. Below the navigation bar, the main heading reads "Specializing in Ornamental & Native Grasses Since 1986". At the bottom, there is a white search bar with the text "FIND YOUR PLANT" and a search input field. To the right of the search bar, there is a section titled "GET CURRENT AVAILABILITY" which is circled in red. This section contains the text "Download our combined availability and order form for prices on individual items, their currently in stock, and future availability." and two buttons: "EXCEL DOWNLOAD" and "PDF DOWNLOAD".

HOFFMAN NURSERY

WE GROW GOOD GRASS[®]

Specializing in Ornamental & Native Grasses Since 1986

FIND YOUR PLANT

GET CURRENT AVAILABILITY

Download our combined availability and order form for prices on individual items, their currently in stock, and future availability.

EXCEL DOWNLOAD PDF DOWNLOAD

Hoffman Nursery Catalog of Grasses



CAREX COMPARISON CHART

Carex	Blade ¹ Mat Height Zone	Blade Width	Color	Characteristics/Habit	Exposure	Moisture
<i>C. amphibia</i>	● 1.5' 3-8"		Green	Bunching habit, widely adaptable	Full	Wet
<i>C. appalachica</i>	● 1' 3-8"		Green	Similar to <i>C. pennsylvanica</i> but has bunching habit	Full	Wet
<i>C. dickhells</i>	● 3' 3-7"		Green	Bunching habit, more tolerant of dry soils than other Carex	Full	Wet
<i>C. diachneoides</i> "Red Rounder"	2' 7-9"		Opposite-blade	Bunching, upright habit with arching foliage	Full	Wet
<i>C. elankensis</i>	● 1.5' 6-9"		Green	Bunching, spreads via short rhizomes, reseeds heavily, mostly evergreen	Full	Wet
<i>C. gemma</i>	● 4' 4-9"		Green	Bunching, with short rhizomes, showy seed heads similar to <i>C. lurida</i> , but green	Full	Wet
<i>C. grisea</i>	● 4' 3-8"		Blue-green	Bunching habit, reseeds slowly to form colonies, hanging seed heads	Full	Wet
<i>C. stricta</i>	1.5' 5-9"		Green	Bunching habit, performs well under shade trees, widely adaptable	Full	Wet
<i>C. dichostachya</i> "Waggy Nishiky"	1' 5-9"		Green wavy margins	Bunching habit, needs moist soil in sun	Full	Wet
<i>C. exoniensis</i>	● 1' 2-6"		Green	Slowly rhizomatous, will reseed lightly, takes drier conditions with shade	Full	Wet
<i>C. elata</i> "Aurea"	2' 6-8"		Green-gold variegated	Bunching habit, thrives in up to 3" of water	Full	Wet
<i>C. flacca</i>	10" 4-8"		Blue-gray	Somewhat bunching, forms mat-like colonies via rhizomes	Full	Wet
<i>C. flacca</i> "Blue Zinger"	10" 4-8"		Blue-green	Bunching, forms colonies via rhizomes, more upright than species	Full	Wet

Blade Width Fine Medium Broad

¹North American native

NO STYX GRASS SYSTEM™

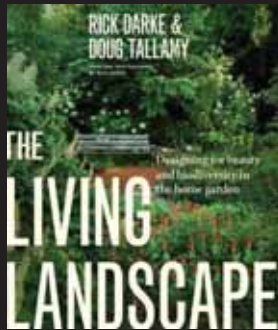
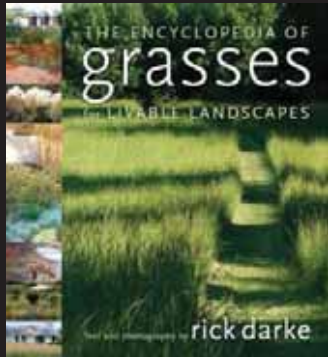
CAREX COMPARISON CHART

Carex	Blade ¹ Mat Height Zone	Blade Width	Color	Characteristics/Habit	Exposure	Moisture
<i>C. flacca</i>	● 2' 5-8"		Green	Bunching, rhizomatous spreader, spiky seed heads food for waterfowl	Full	Wet
<i>C. gypsi</i>	● 3' 3-8"		Green	Bunching, spreads slowly via rhizomes and seed; very showy seed heads	Full	Wet
<i>C. (pennsylvanica)</i> "Hobby" "Burry Blue"	● 1' 5-9"		Blue-green	Bunching habit, spreads slowly via rhizomes	Full	Wet
<i>C. lupulina</i>	● 4' 3-8"		Green	Bunching habit, short rhizomes, showy, spiky seed heads	Full	Wet
<i>C. lurida</i>	● 3' 3-8"		Green	Bunching habit, spiky seed heads similar to <i>C. comosa</i> , but yellow	Full	Wet
<i>C. montani</i> "Ice Ballet" PF20220	1' 5-9"		Green wavy margins	Spreads vigorously via rhizomes, brighter than "Ice Dance"	Full	Wet
<i>C. monnini</i> "Ice Dance"	1' 5-8"		Green wavy margins	Spreads vigorously via rhizomes, more subtle than "Ice Ballet"	Full	Wet
<i>C. muskingumensis</i>	● 2' 4-8"		Green	Palm-like foliage, spreads via rhizomes and seed, can take sun with moist soil	Full	Wet
<i>C. ochotensis</i> "EverColor" "Everest"	1' 6-8"		Green white margins	Bunching habit with full arching foliage, a good grower	Full	Wet
<i>C. ochotensis</i> "EverColor" "Eveline"	1' 6-8"		Yellow	Bunching habit with full arching foliage, very showy and a good grower	Full	Wet
<i>C. ochotensis</i> "EverColor" "Everline"	1' 6-8"		Green white margins	Bunching habit with full arching foliage, a good grower; slow time-on-tone effect	Full	Wet
<i>C. ochotensis</i> "EverColor" "Evergreen"	2' 6-8"		Lime yellow wavy margins	Head flexing habit with full arching foliage, a good grower	Full	Wet
<i>C. ochotensis</i> "Evergold"	1' 6-8"		Yellow green wavy margins	Bunching habit with full arching foliage, excellent low ground cover	Full	Wet

Blade Width Fine Medium Broad

¹North American Native

1-800-203-8000 NOFFMANRRHYTHM.COM



Perennial Plant Symposium

Raleigh, NC

July 30-August 3, 2018



Bringing Plant People Together

MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW!

Three Core Days with tours, presentations, and round table discussions.

Two additional days of tours. CEUs will be available.



HOFFMAN
NURSERY

WE GROW GOOD GRASS!™

Thank you!

shannoncurrey@hoffmannursery.com



hoffmannursery.com

All content © Hoffman Nursery, Inc. unless otherwise noted.