

## Ornamental Grasses: Add Spice to your Landscape

Ornamental grasses enhance a garden any time of the year, but they might just be most majestic in the winter. Ornamental grasses provide structure, texture, and drama to the landscape. Below are a few of the best ornamental grasses/grass-like plants that you can consider to add to your landscape. Many also attract birds to your garden by providing shelter and food.

**Muhly grass, scientific name (*Muhlenbergia capillaris*):** This relatively pest free grass has very showy fall flowers. The flowers have a pink purplish red look. Muhly grass is very versatile in that it can survive drought and flooding.

**Pampas Grass, Pumila, scientific name (*Cortaderia selloana*):** This beauty's 6-foot-tall blooms coincide with those of *Perovskia* and *Rudbeckia* for a lovely contrast of texture, height, and color.

**Elliott's Lovegrass, scientific name (*Eragrostis elliottii*):** A showy perennial grass that flowers year round especially in the fall.

**Zebra grass, scientific name (*Miscanthus sinensis*):** Is an upright to arching ornamental grass that forms a dense clump of green or variegated foliage and adds great character to the landscape. Although it has its share of pests and diseases, it is still an excellent specimen.

**Gamma Grass, scientific name (*Tripsacum dactyloides*)** - This grass is very versatile, it produces flowers in the summer; the colors can be cream, orange, red, or yellow. This grass is tough and will tolerate brief periods of flooding and standing water and serves as an excellent source of food for *Byssus Skipper* butterfly.

**Liriope muscari Grass:** is a tough grass that can grow in dry conditions, in sun, or shade and can be used as a groundcover, a border plant, alongside sidewalks, around trees, and in out-of-the-way spots in a backyard. The flowers are very colorful and the plant has a thick root system. Liriope and mondo grass are different but have the same appearance and function. Mondo grass does not grow as tall as liriope.

**Bulbine:** This is not an ornamental grass but fits right into the mix if planted close to each other. It reminds me of daylily, very versatile in that it can be planted just about in any area of the landscape. Bulbine grows well in drought conditions and in sandy soils with low nutrient availability. They produce beautiful flowers and bloom more than once per year.

This article is just a brief overview and you are encouraged to contact Grantly Ricketts at UF/IFAS Extension in Osceola County at [gricketts@ufl.edu](mailto:gricketts@ufl.edu) or by phone 321-697-3000 for more information or for questions on horticulture.