ORNAMENTAL GRASSES IN THE LANDSCAPE

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Presented by:
UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County

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WHAT ARE ORNAMENTAL GRASSES?

- True grasses (*Poaceae*)
- Grass-like plants
- Grass look-alikes
- Lawns?
TYPES

Clumping grasses

Running grasses
Warm season grasses
- start growing in spring
- flourish in heat of summer
- begin dormancy in fall

Cool season grasses
- grow in winter or early spring
- thrive in cool, moist weather
- begin dormancy in summer
USES . . .
SCREENING
IN MIXED SHRUB & PERENNIAL BEDS
AS GROUND COVERS
AS SPECIMEN PLANTS & FOCAL POINTS
IN CONTAINERS
AS WINTER INTEREST
PLANT HARDINESS ZONES

• USDA

• Sunset

• American Horticulture Society heat zones
SITE CONSIDERATIONS

• Exposure
• Dry / wet areas
• Soil type
WHAT'S IN A BOTANICAL NAME?

Echinacea purpurea 'Magnus' (Purple Coneflower)

(genus) (species) (cultivar) (common name)
PATENTED PLANTS

- PPAF (plant patent applied for)
- PP # (plant patent number)
PLANTING & MAINTENANCE
PLANTING

• Best time: Right now!
• Pot size / spacing
• Don't amend soil
• Hole should be twice the diameter of container
• Crown should be 1-2 inches above soil line
• Add a layer of mulch & water thoroughly
MULCHING

- Decreases weeds
- Helps retain moisture
- Keeps plants cool in summer
- Gives the garden a finished look
WATERING

- Drip emitter irrigation vs. overhead sprinklers
- Soaker hoses
- In-line drip irrigation (Netafim)

(Note: Drought-tolerant grasses need water until established.)
FERTILIZING

- Fertilizer labels: N – P – K
- Synthetic vs. organic
CUTTING BACK

When?

Exceptions
DIVIDING

When clumps become overgrown or centers die out
PHOTO GALLERY
Acorus gramineus 'Variegatus'
(Variegated Sweet Flag)
Andropogon gerardii
(Big Bluestem, Turkeyfoot)
Alopecurus pratensis
'Aureus'
(Yellow Foxtail Grass)
Aristida purpurea
(Purple Three-Awn)
* California Native *
Arrhenatherum elatius bulbosum
'Variegatum'
(Bulbous Oat Grass)
Bamboo
**Bouteloua gracilis**
(Blue Grama, Mosquito Grass)
Calamagrostis × acutiflora 'Karl Foerster'  
(Feather Reed Grass)
Carex 'Ice Dance'
(Sedge)
Carex buchananii
(Leatherleaf Sedge)
Carex pansa
(California Meadow Sedge)
* California Native *
Chasmanthium latifolium
(Sea Oats)
Deschampsia cespitosa
(Hair Grass)
Elymus magellanicus
(Magellan Wheatgrass)
Festuca glauca 'Elijah Blue'
(Common Blue Fescue)
**Festuca idahoensis**
'Siskiyou Blue'  
(Fescue)  
* California Native *
Hakonechloa macra
'All Gold'
(Japanese Forest Grass)

Hakonechloa macra
'Aureola'
(Japanese Forest Grass)
Helictotrichon sempervirens
(Blue Oat Grass)
*Imperata cylindrica* 'Rubra'
(Japanese Blood Grass)
Juncus effusus
(Soft Rush)
Juncus patens
(California Gray Rush)
* California Native *
Liriope muscari 'Variegata'
(Big Blue Lily Turf)
Milium effusum 'Aureum' (Bowles' Golden Grass)
Miscanthus sp.

Photo: Blue Shield office complex, El Dorado Hills
Miscanthus sp.

Photo: Lotus Valley Nursery & Gardens
Miscanthus sinensis
'Gracillimus'
(Eulalia, Japanese Silver Grass)
*Miscanthus sinensis 'Morning Light'*
(Eulalia, Japanese Silver Grass)
Miscanthus sinensis 'Variegatus'
(Eulalia, Japanese Silver Grass)
Miscanthus sinensis var. condensatus 'Cosmopolitan'
(Maiden Grass, Japanese Silver Grass)
Miscanthus x 'Giganteus'
(Giant Silver Grass)
Molinia caerulea
(Moor Grass)
Muhlenbergia capillaris
(Pink Muhly)
Muhlenbergia rigens (Deer Grass)
* California Native *

Photo: Memorial garden at Hwy. 50 off ramp & Schnell School Road, Placerville
Ophiopogon japonica
(Mondo Grass)

Ophiopogon planiscapus
'Nigrescens'
(Black Mondo Grass)
Panicum virgatum 'Shenandoah'
(Switch Grass)
Pennisetum orientale
(Fountain Grass)

Photo: All Star Rents on Placerville Drive, Placerville
Pennisetum setaceum
'Rubrum'
(Purple Fountain Grass)
Phalaris arundinacea picta
(Ribbon Grass, Gardener's Garters)
Sesleria autumnalis
(Autumn Moor Grass)
Schizachyrium scoparium
(Little Bluestem)
Stipa gigantea
(Giant Feather Grass)
Stipa tenuissima
(Mexican Feather Grass)
Thank you so much for attending

Happy Gardening!