












Top Ten Ornamental Grasses

Genus (family) Name	Species/ Cultivar (type) Height	Comments	Photograph
Miscanthus	<p>sinensis 'Morning Light'</p> <p><i>Grows up to 1.5m</i></p>	<p>Has fine, variegated blades of mid- green and white. Grows from a narrow clump to create a vase-like shape.</p> <p>Plant amongst tall flowering perennials such as Helenium, Knautia macedonia, Heliopsis, Agapanthus.</p> <p>This is a deciduous plant, but leave the clump intact over winter to give interest at height in the border and then cut the whole clump down to the ground in late February/early March.</p>	
Miscanthus	<p>sinensis 'Zwergelofant'</p> <p><i>Up to 2.2m tall.</i></p>	<p>Plant this clump-forming grass at the back of border where it will provide stunning dark reddish, silky flower heads in late summer/autumn.</p> <p>This is a deciduous plant, but leave the clump intact over winter to give interest at height in the border and then cut the whole clump down to the ground in late February/early March.</p>	

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Stipa	<p>gigantea</p> <p><i>Low growing clump of base leaf blades but flower heads that are 1.8m high</i></p>	<p>The flower heads are stunning at with golden oat-like tassels in late summer. Best planted in the middle of a border as you can see other plants through the flower heads; it needs a well-drained soil.</p> <p>Leave the seed heads over winter if they are not damaged by wind and rain and then cut down in February. The grass blades are evergreen.</p> <p>The flower heads can also be used in cut flower arrangements.</p>	
Panicum	<p>virgatum 'Cloud Nine'</p> <p><i>Can grow up to 2m high</i></p>	<p>Better in the middle of a wide border or the back of a border. Its leaf blades are a grey/blue colour and flower heads are delicate and airy with a metallic sheen in mid-late summer.</p> <p>The flower heads can be used in cut flower arrangements.</p>	
Carex	<p>elata 'Aurea'</p> <p>(Bowles Golden Sedge)</p> <p><i>Grows to 60cm.</i></p>	<p>Delicate, clumping forming grass with fine golden green leaf blades creates the illusion of a patch of sunlight; plant near the front of a border.</p> <p>This deciduous plant, can be left intact over winter to give interest and then cut the down to the ground in late February/early March.</p>	

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Hordeum	<p>jubatum</p> <p>(Foxtail Barley or Squirrel Tail Grass)</p> <p>60cm high</p>	<p>Annual grass which grows silky flower heads that catch the sunlight and wind to create a movement in a border in mid to late summer.</p> <p>A similar effect can be achieved with <i>Stipa tenuissima</i>, which is a short lived perennials grass that will self-seed around the garden and has finer flower heads.</p>	
Briza	<p>maxima</p> <p>(Quaking Grass)</p> <p>30cm</p>	<p>Another annual grass with flower heads (held on delicate stems) that quiver and rattle in the breeze.</p> <p>A great addition to a bed or patch of annual flowers and can be used in cut-flower arrangements.</p>	
Elymus	<p><i>magellanicus</i></p> <p>Magellan rye grass</p> <p>60cm high</p>	<p>Deciduous grass with eye-catching bluey-grey leaf blades with a delicate arching habit.</p> <p>These form well-behaved clumps and can be cut back in late autumn. They prefer sun and well-drained soil.</p>	

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Hakonechola	<p>macra aureola</p> <p>25cm high.</p>	<p>Low-growing, slowly spreading grass with soft leaf blades of yellow and mid-green variation.</p> <p>Can be planted under small trees or shrubs and with small flowering plants such as Geums.</p> <p>Also looks great in containers. Just remove and divided when it becomes too congested.</p> <p>This deciduous plant, can be left intact over winter to give interest and then cut the down to the ground in late February/early March.</p>	
Luzula	<p>sylvatica marginata</p> <p>(Great Wood rush)</p> <p>40cm high.</p>	<p>Evergreen, low-growing, spreading grass with mid-green leaves and a narrow white margin.</p> <p>Taller brown flower spikes in May. Good for the front of a border or under Japanese Acers or similar small trees or shrubs.</p> <p>Remove old leaves in the spring.</p>	