



Common Names:
Fountain Grass

Plant Type: Perennial;
Ornamental Grass

Light Requirements:
Full Sun

Height: 2.5'-5' tall and
wide, depending on
variety

Bloom Time: Late
summer/fall

Hardiness Zones: 5-10

Pennisetum

Pennisetum is an herbaceous perennial in the grass family (Poaceae). Commonly called fountain grass, it is a clumping grass native to eastern Asia. Pennisetum grows anywhere from 2.5 ft. to 5 ft tall and wide, with gracefully arching leaves at maturity. Pennisetum is a warm-season grass which blooms in late summer with flower spikes that resemble fuzzy bottlebrushes. There are many cultivars, bred for different heights and flower hues. Foliage ages to orange-bronze in fall and eventually fades to light beige during the winter.

Pennisetum needs full sun to bloom, and it prefers moist, well-drained soil. It can tolerate dry soils and drought once established, but it does not prefer soggy soil as this can cause crown rot. Maintenance needs are relatively low; trim foliage to 3-6" above the ground in early spring to make way for new growth. Pennisetum should be divided every 3-5 years, or when the plants have an open center at the base.

Pennisetum may be considered invasive in some states because of its tendency to self-seed aggressively. Young plants can be easily pulled in a garden situation, but since seeds disperse by wind, it is important to take care when planting near natural areas.

References:

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/cenchrus-alopecuroides/>

<https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/articles/fountain-grass-pennisetum-alopecuroides/>

https://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/fountain_grass