



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

***Miscanthus sinensis var. strictus*¹**

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Introduction

This cultivar of Maiden Grass has a distinctive, neat upright growth habit. Few leaves droop or weep toward the ground as do many of the other cultivars. Slender leaves marked with a band of yellow originate in a clump, spreading out and up like a fountain. The 6 to 8-foot-tall clumps bear pink flowers in late summer and fall which can be used for drying or as a dye plant. Their pinkish or coppery 8- to 10-inch-long plumes are held above the foliage and persist into the winter. Foliage is stiffer than 'Zebrinus' but still blows easily in the wind. This shrub-like grass turns to a rich gold in the fall; the fall color lasts through the winter.

General Information

Scientific name: *Miscanthus sinensis var. strictus*

Pronunciation: miss-KANTH-us sye-NEN-sis variety STRICK-tuss

Common name(s): Porcupine Grass, Banded Miscanthus

Family: *Gramineae*

Plant type: herbaceous; ornamental grass

USDA hardiness zones: 4 through 9 (Fig. 1)

Planting month for zone 7: year round

Planting month for zone 8: year round

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: mass planting; border; container or above-ground planter; screen; accent

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

Description

Height: 6 to 8 feet

Spread: 6 to 8 feet

Plant habit: upright

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: fast

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: serrate

Leaf shape: lanceolate

Leaf venation: parallel

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaf blade length: more than 36 inches

Leaf color: variegated

Fall color: brown or tan

Fall characteristic: showy

Flower

Flower color: pink

Flower characteristic: summer flowering; fall flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: no fruit

Fruit length: no fruit

Fruit cover: no fruit

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Figure 1. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Fruit color: no fruit
Fruit characteristic: no fruit

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: typically multi-trunked or clumping stems
Current year stem/twig color: not applicable
Current year stem/twig thickness: not applicable

Other

Roots: not applicable
Winter interest: plant has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers
Outstanding plant: plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more
Invasive potential: aggressive, spreading plant
Pest resistance: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun
Soil tolerances: extended flooding; acidic; sand; loam; clay; slightly alkaline
Drought tolerance:
Soil salt tolerances: poor
Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Use and Management

Maiden Grass is frequently used in the landscape as a specimen or screen. It is also employed in group plantings forming a nice mass of fine-textured foliage. Use Porcupine Grass as an accent or mass planted in a large-scale landscape, such as around a commercial building to add a touch of soft elegance and texture. The slightest breeze moves the foliage allowing the landscape to ‘come alive’. Many people prefer to cut the grass back to the ground in the spring so new green growth is not covered with last year’s dried, brown foliage.

Porcupine Grass will grow in a location in the landscape that receives full sun or part shade. It is adaptable to most well-

drained soils and will grow in several inches of standing water. This ornamental grass is not as tolerant to drought as many of the others. *Miscanthus sinensis* is a warm season grass and transplants best in the spring.

Other cultivars include: 'Condensatus', coarser leaf texture than species, mid-summer bloom, 7 to 8 feet tall; 'Gracillimus', narrower leaves than species, fall bloom, upright growth habit from 5 to 8 feet tall; 'Purpurescens', reddish foliage in summer, purple-red foliage in fall, silver pink inflorescence, mid-summer bloom, 4 to 5 feet tall; 'Silver Feather', silvery white flowers in mid-summer; 'Variegatus', white variegation on leaf margin, does relatively well in partial shade, to 7 feet tall; 'Yaku Jima', more compact, 3 to 4 feet tall; 'Zebrinus', horizontal yellow bands on foliage, wide spreading habit, to 7 feet tall.

The propagation of *Miscanthus sinensis* is by division in the spring.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern. Rust diseases occasionally infest the foliage but it often goes away in drier weather.