



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

Cortaderia selloana¹

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Introduction

Pampas Grass forms large, impressive clumps, 8 to 10 feet high and wide, with beautiful silver to white feathery plumes arising on female plants in summer and autumn (Fig. 1). This vigorous ornamental grass is widely used as a lawn specimen but its quick growth rate and large size make it unsuitable for most home landscapes. However, it is ideal for barrier or windbreak plantings and has a place in larger areas such as along highways or in commercial or industrial landscapes.

General Information

Scientific name: *Cortaderia selloana*

Pronunciation: kor-tuh-DEER-ee-uh sel-loe-AY-nuh

Common name(s): Pampas Grass

Family: *Poaceae*

Plant type: ornamental grass; perennial; herbaceous

USDA hardiness zones: 5B through 11 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 7: year round

Planting month for zone 8: year round

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: border; mass planting; specimen; accent; cut flowers

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

Description

Height: 8 to 10 feet

Spread: 8 to 10 feet

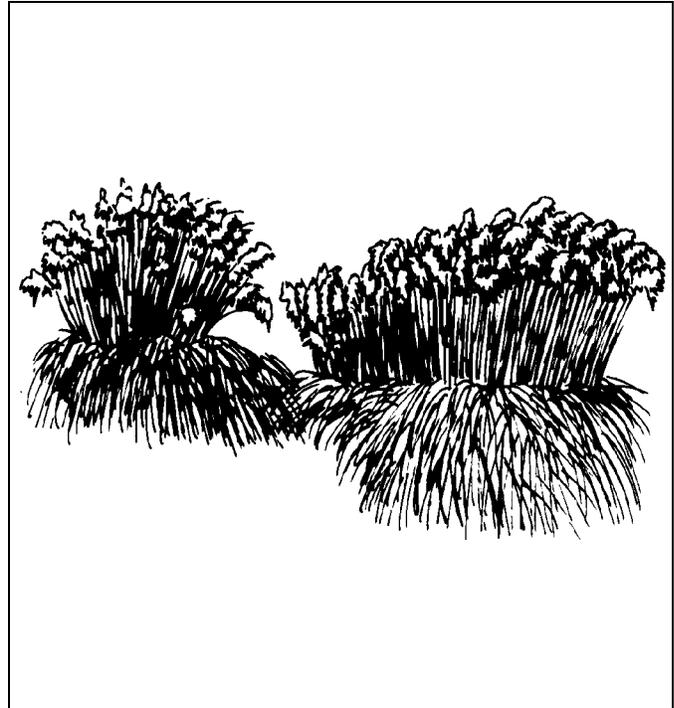


Figure 1. Pampas Grass.

Plant habit: upright

Plant density: dense

Growth rate: fast

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

1. This document is Fact Sheet FPS-145, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: October 1999. Please visit the EDIS web site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: serrate
Leaf shape: linear
Leaf venation: parallel
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaf blade length: more than 36 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: pink
Flower characteristic: fall flowering; summer flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval
Fruit length: less than .5 inch
Fruit cover: dry or hard
Fruit color: tan
Fruit characteristic: persists on the plant

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

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun

Soil tolerances: alkaline; clay; sand; acidic; loam

Drought tolerance: high

Soil salt tolerances: moderate

Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: sprouts from roots or lower trunk

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Pest resistance: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

Use and Management

In sun or partial shade, Pampas Grass grows well in most soils except very wet ones, tolerating drought and salt spray, making it especially attractive for seaside landscapes. Be careful in the placement of Pampas Grass in the landscape, however, as it gets larger than most people realize. Many are planted in residential landscapes and later removed because it has grown too large. Children may cut themselves if they accidentally fall into the plant because the edges of the leaves are sharply serrated. Plant six to eight feet apart in a mass planting.

Cultivars include: 'Argenteum', silvery plumes; 'Gold Band', yellow-edged leaves; 'Pumila', dwarf, four to six feet high; 'Rendatleri', pink plumes; 'Rosa Feder', pink plumes; 'Sunningdale Silver', silvery white plumes; and 'White', white, feathery plumes.

Propagation is by division.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.