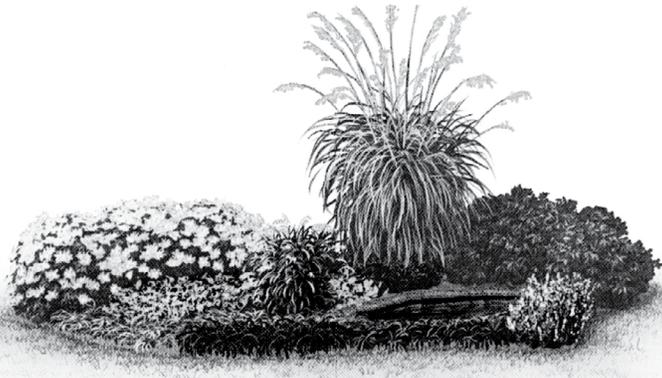


Ornamental Grasses for the Midsouth Landscape



Ornamental grasses with their variety of form, color, texture, and size add diversity and dimension to a landscape. Not many other groups of plants can boast attractiveness during practically all seasons. The only time they could be considered not to contribute to the beauty of the landscape is the few weeks in the early spring between cutting back the old growth of the warm-season grasses until the sprouting of new growth. From their emergence in the spring through winter, warm-season ornamental grasses add drama, grace, and motion to the landscape unlike any other plants.

One of the unique and desirable contributions ornamental grasses make to the landscape is their sound. Anyone who has ever been in a pine forest on a windy day is aware of the ethereal music of wind against pine foliage. The effect varies with the strength of the wind and the season, from the rustling of a slight summer breeze to the sharp, crisp sound of brisk winter winds bending the dry seedheads and foliage. Light adds to the musical display. Some grasses come into their glory when backlit by the setting sun. You can lengthen this display into the night by adding outdoor lighting.

Planting grasses near water, where light, sound, and wind is reflected and amplified, is another way to maximize the dramatic impact in the landscape. For an example of a design plan for a small water garden, see **Figure 1**.

True grasses make up a large group of monocots (Liliopsida) within the Gramineae or Poaceae family. There are approximately 10,000 species of grasses. Although they may seem

similar, grasses vary greatly, ranging from cool season to warm season grasses, from woody to herbaceous, and from annuals to long-lived perennials.

This variation has resulted in five recognized subfamilies within Poaceae. They are Arundinoideae, a unique mix of woody and herbaceous grass species; Bambusoideae, the bamboos; Chloridoideae, warm-season herbaceous grasses; Panicoideae, also warm-season herbaceous grasses; and Pooideae, a cool-season subfamily.

Their habitats also vary. Grasses are found across the globe, including in Antarctica. They have a strong presence in prairies, like those in the Great Plains, and savannas, like those in southern Africa. It is important to recognize these natural characteristics when using grasses for ornament, since they determine adaptability and management within a landscape or region, as well as invasive potential.

Several grasses are cultivated for forage, turf, ornamental, and wildlife benefits. Although the focus of this publication is ornamental grasses, these grasses may serve wildlife in the landscape as well. In addition, native ornamental grasses may add natural heritage value to a landscape.

Grasses can be broadly grouped as herbaceous or woody. Even though grass-like ornamentals, such as *Liriope* spp., *Lomandra* spp., *Ophiopogon* spp., and close grass relatives, such as the sedges (Cyperaceae) and rushes (Junaceae) can be included in the general category of “ornamental grasses,” they are not true grasses and are not discussed in this publication.

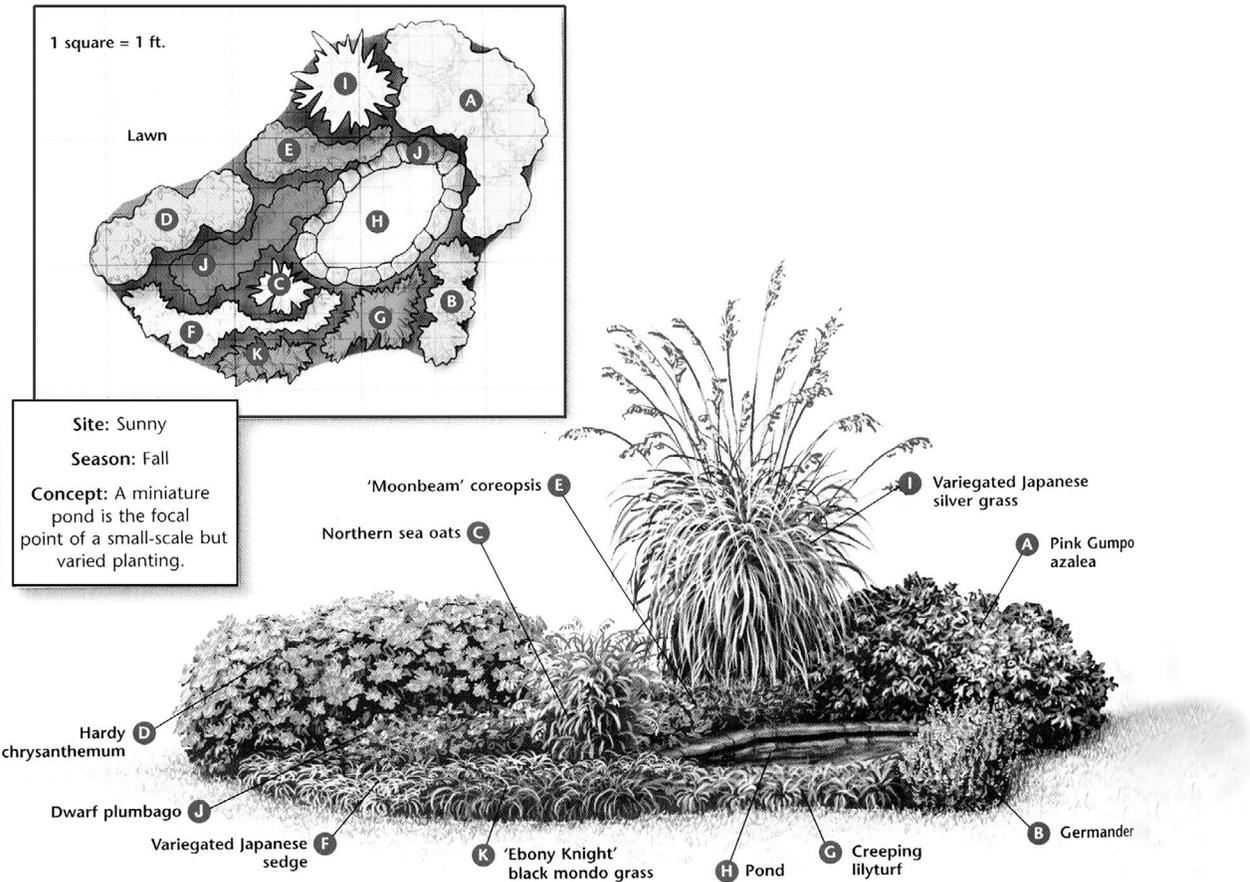


Figure 1. Site Plan 1.

Using Ornamental Grasses in Landscape Design

Beauty is reason enough to use grasses in the landscape, but grasses can also be useful. If a landscape has a special need, an ornamental grass probably can fill that need. Whether you need a ground cover, a screen, a specimen plant, or a container plant, you have many choices of grasses to fill those needs. The comments section of the tables at the end of this publication gives specific landscape features for each grass.

Grasses can attract wildlife by providing food, nesting, and cover. Grasses in combination with other perennials or annuals can add to the layers of vegetation that attract wildlife by providing a transition or bridge between the woods and the lawn's edge. The larger grasses can function as outdoor room dividers, directing and controlling traffic or movement through the garden. Larger grasses can act as subtle backdrops for showier other plants, and even as windbreaks. Smaller grasses can be ground covers, container plants, edging, and erosion control. Both large and small can fill multiple duties, such as specimen, erosion control, foundation plant, and wildlife habitat. See **Figure 2** for an example of an attractive corner planting that incorporates ornamental grass.

Design and Selection Tips for Ornamental Grasses

Combining different grasses, or grasses with shrubs, flowers, or other ornamentals, can be both daunting and fun—there are so many choices! The only limiting factor could be local availability. Thankfully, as grasses have become more popular, availability has increased. More and more garden centers and nurseries have a wide selection. If you cannot find a particular grass at a local garden center or nursery, search online for mail order nurseries. You can find many other sources using Internet search engines.

When combining grasses with other ornamentals, consider using plants with bold, coarse textured foliage to offset the feathery, mounding form and soft texture of certain other grasses. For example, combine muhly grass (*Muhlenbergia*) with the large, boldly-colored foliage of Tropicana, or Bengal Tiger cannas, Lime Ginger or Black Magic elephant ears, or any banana plant around a pool or water garden. Add a few narrow-leaf evergreen shrubs for winter interest to contrast with the neutral color of the dormant grass, and you have a planting that is attractive through all seasons with little leaf litter to get into the water.

Ornamental grasses adapt themselves well to many situations, sliding easily into beds and borders with many other annuals or perennials. Grasses with their muted colors and graceful shapes can serve as the anchor to “set off” their neighbors. Using grasses with sedums such as Autumn Joy and the orange coneflower *Rudbeckia fulgida* Ait. is a classic combination. Purple coneflower, coreopsis, daylilies, and a host of other perennials combine well with grasses.

When selecting a grass, consider the mature size and shape. Many grasses can overpower their weaker, less robust companions. Proper accommodation of their size when selecting the site prevents the cost of renting a backhoe to remove the overgrown giant later. Be aware of the fall color, if any, and the flowering season and color to know if the grass will complement neighboring plants. Consider ease of maintenance when making a selection.

Also, know how the plant reproduces before making a selection. Is the plant an aggressive invader, spreading by rhizome or root? If so, select a site you can confine, such as a container or bed with a physical barrier of some sort. Does it self-sow readily from seed? If so, there are a few management choices—either remove

the flowers before seed are formed (which would probably be a shame if the flowers were attractive), or be ready to be a vigilant weeder. A third option is to apply a pre-emerge herbicide at the right time to prevent the seed from developing into seedlings.

Using Grasses in Specialty or Theme Gardens

Because grasses are so diverse and adaptable, they can be used in many types of gardens. Ranging from the large estate owner who employs a bevy of gardening staff to the apartment or dorm dweller whose garden consists of one lone container, anyone can grow and enjoy ornamental grass.

Grasses have a place in many theme gardens. For example, ornamental grasses, such as the bamboos, are used extensively in Japanese gardens. Other theme gardens in which grasses could play a role could be a Biblical garden, since the giant reed (*Arundo donax* L.) is believed by many to be the bulrush of the Bible. This garden could include a sorghum plant as well, because some Biblical botanists believe this to be the reed in the crucifixion verses. An herb garden would include the lemon grass [*Cymbopogon citratus* (DC.) Stapf].

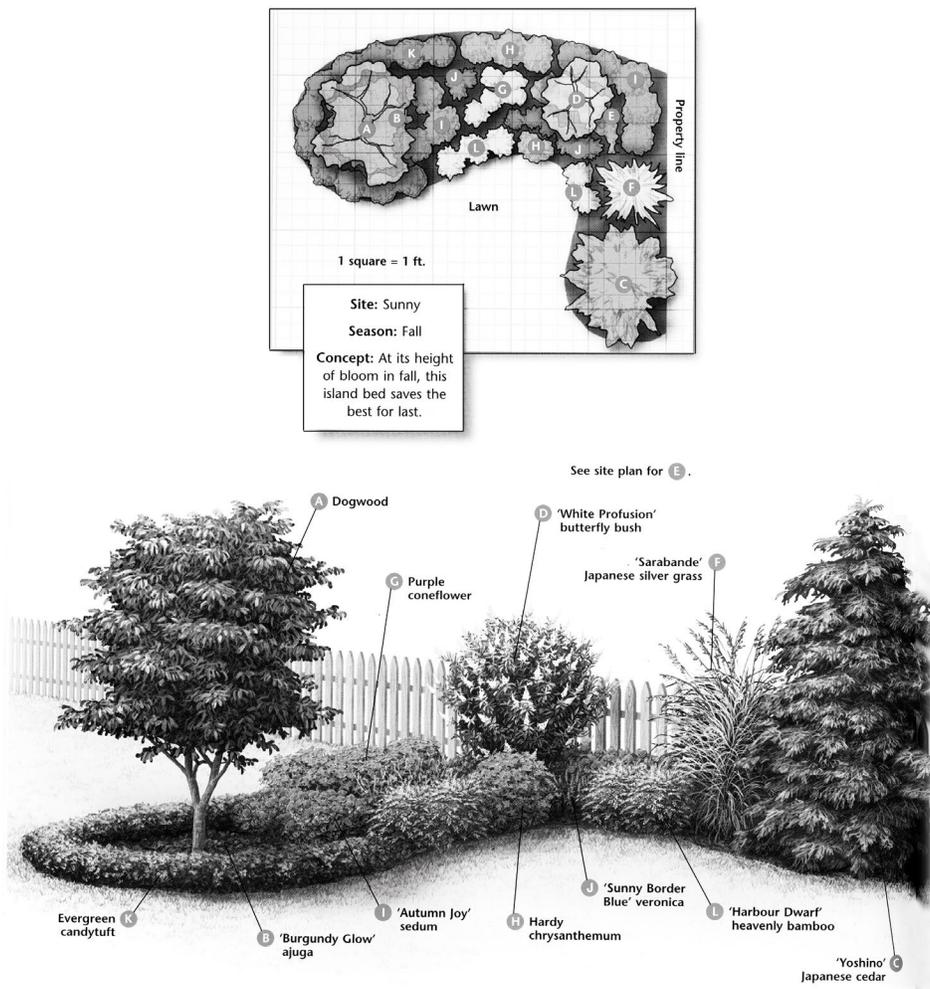


Figure 2. Site Plan 2.

Container Gardens

Container gardens can be large or small, combinations of plants, or just one specimen. Pick the container to match the needs of the plant(s) and to complement the surroundings. Combine several sizes, shapes, and colors of pots into a nice grouping, or pair identical pots on either side of an entryway. Remember that container gardens typically need more attention than the same plants in the ground. Be especially mindful of watering. Use grasses in containers the same way they are used in the landscape, for example, as an accent or focal point of the planting or as a background for the more colorful plants. Grasses can be the large, vertical element of the container or the low, spreading, or cascading element of the container garden. The more aggressive spreaders such as the bamboos could be easily restricted in a container.

Rock or Trough Gardens

Because many types of grasses are very drought tolerant once established and some are dwarf as well, they can be included in rock or trough gardens. You can have fun experimenting to find the best selections.

Water Gardens

Besides the beauty they contribute, grasses can stabilize the edge of a lake, small pond, or stream to prevent erosion. Examples are bamboo or giant reed. Grasses contribute little plant litter to the water, unlike many other ornamental plants. You can choose from many selections that can grow in or near water.

Wildlife Gardens

If you are interested in developing a landscape that is attractive to wildlife, certainly include grasses. Birds and other wildlife feed on the seed heads of many grasses. Many types of wildlife, including birds and small mammals, use the foliage for cover and nesting. Having a diversity of grasses combined with flowering trees, shrubs, and other flowering plants attracts a diversity of wildlife that can add to the sustainability of your landscape.

Craft or Cutting Garden

Floral designers or craftsmen can find many uses for ornamental grasses in their art. The fluffy, colorful flowers and the arching or mounding foliage lend themselves to fresh or dried arrangements. Creating interior accents such as wreaths, garlands, topiaries, swags, or other arrangements with grass inflorescences or foliage is easy and fun for the do-it-yourselfer as well as the professional designer. In particular, incorporating grasses into autumn décor is popular and attractive. A table centerpiece of small, colorful ornamental gourds arranged with a vase of fall flowers and

grasses can be very festive. Adorning the front door with a wreath woven from fall foliage, vines, and branches and decorated with seedpods, cones, and ornamental grasses creates a colorful welcome for any visitors.

Native Garden

Interest is increasing in restoring landscapes to a more native version of the original landscape of this country before the influence of Europeans. Some reasons for using natives include the idea that natives are easy to maintain, they are hardy and adaptable, they are historically interesting, or you might have an interest in plant heritage. Native grasses certainly were a big part of the native flora of the Midsouth and should be an integral part of any native garden. Native grasses are designated as such in the tables in the back of this publication.

For those interested in preserving the local ecotypes, seed or plants collected from locally grown stock can be preferable to those seed or plants grown in another geographic area. Plants with a wide range may exhibit naturally occurring variations, each more suited to one particular region. For example, it just makes sense that a native grass such as little bluestem that is grown from stock in Maine may not be as well suited to your area of the Midsouth as the same little bluestem that is from stock grown in Carriere, Mississippi.

Meadow or Prairie Garden

For those interested in establishing or preserving an area of the landscape as a meadow or prairie, grasses would certainly be a part of the process. Purists might want to stick with using the natives, but introduced grasses can be nice, well behaved additions to a home meadow or prairie area. As two Mississippi native plant enthusiasts, Gail Barton and Marc Pastorek have said, “grasses are the canvases on which wildflowers should be painted.” For further information on establishing a wildflower meadow, see [Extension Publication 1709 Wildflowers for Mississippi Meadows and Gardens](#).

Herbaceous Grasses

Many herbaceous grasses are used as ornamentals. These include many native and introduced ornamental grass species. Grass genera such as *Andropogon*, *Miscanthus*, *Panicum*, and *Uniola* fit within this group. These grasses may be annual or perennial, cool- or warm-season. As you can see, use and management in the landscape can be quite variable. Some can be established from seed, while others are only vegetatively planted, especially variegated grasses.

Some literature is available on ornamental grasses, but this information is not generally specific to the Midsouth region, including Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee. A list of herbaceous grasses considered adapted to the Midsouth is provided in a table at the end of this publication.

Woody Grasses

Woody Grasses include the bamboos (subfamily: Bambusoideae), such as black, goldengroove, and golden bamboos (*Phyllostachys* spp.), and a few other upright perennial grasses (subfamily: Arundinoideae), such as giant reed (*Arundo donax*), reed [*Phragmites australis* (Cav.) Trin. ex Steud.], and others. Although these grasses are often tall, some are short and used as groundcovers.

Many bamboos are now commercially available. Information on many considered adapted to the Midsouth is provided at the end of this publication.

Bamboos include spreaders and clumpers. See **Figures 3 and 4** for growth habits. With clumping bamboo, stalks originate from one area and fan out as they grow upward. The stalks of spreading bamboo are spread out across the ground. Although spreaders can fill voids for screening, they can also be invasive and very difficult to kill once established. Always consider the long-term effects of planting such grasses. For this reason, you may prefer clumpers, such as *Bambusa multiplex* (Lour.) Raeusch. ex Schult. & Schult. f. and others.

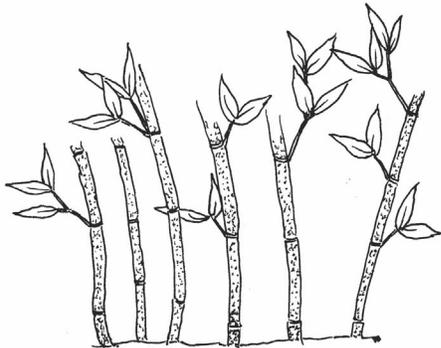


Figure 3. Clumping bamboo.

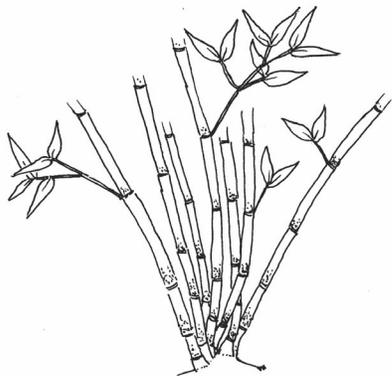


Figure 4. Spreading bamboo.

Invasive or Weedy Ornamental Grasses

Aside from their use as ornamentals, some ornamental grasses can pose a serious risk of invasion in the landscape. This is particularly true of introduced ornamental grasses, and some, like giant reed, are now regulated as federal or state noxious weeds. Other introduced ornamental grasses may escape within the landscape and cause problems but are not regulated. These grasses should require special management considerations or be avoided.

New ornamental grasses are continually introduced. Be cautious, and avoid purchasing and/or planting problematic or invasive grasses. Planting invasive grasses can result be costly and require hard work to remove from the landscape and possibly surrounding landscapes.

Because of problems from certain introduced grasses, many landscapes now host native grasses. Although some native grasses can be invasive, they are a part of the natural heritage of this country and of lesser concern. Some native alternatives to exotic invasive ornamental grasses are provided in the back of this publication. It is important to remember that an invasive grass in one state or region may not be invasive in another state or region. Like other invasive species, invasive grasses can have regional specificity. When in doubt, it is better to be cautious or avoid using such grasses.

Propagation of Ornamental Grasses

It is important to understand the differences between cool-season and warm-season grasses when propagating. Cool-season grasses, also called C₃ grasses, prefer cooler growing temperatures in the fall and spring. These grasses are best propagated in fall before more favorable growing conditions. Warm-season grasses, also called C₄ grasses, prefer warmer growing conditions in summer. These grasses are best propagated in spring before more favorable conditions. Most Southern ornamental grasses are warm-season grasses.

Propagation can be vegetative or by seed. Many cultivars should only be propagated vegetatively, including variegated cultivars or those with distinctive leaf or other specific characteristics. This is the most common way to propagate ornamental grasses. But for large areas of native grasses, this method may be too expensive.

Seed propagation is generally desirable under these circumstances, although species and cultivar options can be limited. You can collect seed locally, but in most cases large commercial growers ship seed to local retailers across the country. This seed may not contain local ecotypes of native grasses, but the cultivars may be well adapted to this region.

Whether adapted or not, it is important to remember that management options, such as fertilization, landscape placement, and irrigation, can overcome many issues with poor adaptation. Grasses requiring management to survive in the landscape are usually less invasive.

Naturalizing with Native Grasses

Naturalizing usually pertains to larger areas where a natural, less formal landscape is desired. Establishment and management of these areas are similar to that used on golf courses, pastures, and natural areas. Research has been conducted on seed establishment and management of native grass stands, and information available on establishing and managing native grasses is also available on the web.

Generally large areas of native grasses are established by seed. Warm-season grasses are generally seeded in the spring, while cool-season grasses are seeded in the fall. The typical planting unit is pounds (lbs) Pure Live Seed (PLS) per acre. Planting mixes of more than one species is common. Seed can be broadcast by hand or rotary spreader. But seed with a lot of hair will not broadcast from a rotary spreader. Hand broadcasting, with the addition of sand, is generally necessary. Such seed can be hydroseeded or hydromulched, but this requires specialized equipment.

Typical seeding rates for common, warm-season grasses are 20 lbs PLS/A for big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii* Vitm.), 5 lbs PLS/A for broomsedge (*Andropogon virginicus* L.), 30 lbs PLS/A for indiagrass [*Sorghastrum nutans* (L.) Nash], 25 lbs PLS/A for little bluestem [*Schizachyrium scoparium* (Michx.) Nash], and 10 lbs PLS/A for switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum* L.). Perennial grasses can be slow to establish and may take two or more years to reach maturity. Switchgrass tends to reach maturity faster than other native perennial grasses and is one of the few you can broadcast with a rotary spreader.

Weeds are often an issue in establishing seeded cultivars. Weed seed may be a result of disturbance of the existing soil-seed bank and/or a result of contamination in the purchased seed. Either way, weeds can cause establishment failure if not dealt with in a timely manner.

You can mow taller weeds while grasses are short. Some weeds can be hand pulled, but larger stands may require herbicides. Certain broadleaf herbicides for broadleaf weed control are usually safe on most native grasses. However, very small, newly emerged grass seedlings may be injured by herbicides that are safe to well-established grasses. Test low rates of herbicides on

small areas of newly emerged grasses to check species tolerance before treating large areas. Herbicides containing 2,4-D or similar products are typical, but always read and follow label directions, and consider seedling maturity.

Other Seeded Grasses

A few other ornamental grasses are seed propagated. These include a few cool-season annuals and perennials, such as *Festuca*, and a small number of warm-season annual and perennial grasses, such as *Coix* and certain *Pennisetum* spp. These are best planted in small containers until established and then transplanted into the landscape.

Vegetative Propagation

of Herbaceous Ornamental Grasses

Vegetative propagation is the most common form of propagation for herbaceous perennial ornamental grasses. It is almost always done by division of rhizomes, stolons, or tillers of larger plants. This is best practiced early in or just before the growing season to allow time for full development. This would be fall for cool-season grasses and early spring for warm-season grasses. You can grow recently divided plants in containers to encourage quicker establishment.

Vegetative Propagation of Bamboos

Bamboos are propagated from rhizomes, since plants may take years to flower. Clumping bamboos, such as *Bambusa multiplex*, have very short rhizomes and can be more difficult to propagate. Spreading bamboos, such as *Phyllostachys*, are easier to propagate, although most bamboos are slow to establish. It is important to have several nodes on each rhizome being propagated. Avoid excessive bending when planting.

Once planted, the bamboo may not have full vigor for a year or more. First culms (stalks or shoots) are generally smaller, eventually reaching full size over time.

Once established, bamboos can live for many years. You may see them at old home sites long after homeowners have left. Thus, keep this in mind when planting spreading bamboos, since they may spread to adjacent property and cause poor relations with neighbors.

Larger bamboos may need a a culm-and-a-half or more width of mowed space to keep plants from crossing an area. For example, if the mature height is expected to be 30 feet, then allow 45 feet or more of lawn space around the planting area.

Smaller bamboos, such as *Pleiblastus pygmaeus* (Miq.) Nak., can tolerate certain amounts of mowing and may spread easily into areas where they are not wanted. Thus, enclose small, groundcover-type bamboos to prevent unwanted spread. Use concrete or steel ground barriers. Always make sure they are much deeper than the rhizomes.

Management of Ornamental Grasses

Grasses typically respond well to fertilization. But over fertilizing can cause lodging, which is not desirable. Once established, many ornamental grasses do not need fertilization, so this is one of the benefits of using ornamental grasses. Rates of 1 lb of nitrogen per 1000 sq. ft. per growing month should be adequate for establishing most ornamental grasses.

Remember that growing seasons are different for cool- and warm-season grasses. The first application during the growing season could include an even analysis fertilizer (e.g. 13-13-13). We recommend a soil test analysis before you apply complete fertilizers.

Pruning is often necessary for grasses, since determinate flowering is typical. Determinate flowering means that once flowering is complete, the flowering culm eventually dies. Culms may be annual or take a year or more to flower, so you may not want to remove all foliage.

You can remove individually flowering culms from some grasses, such as pampas grass [*Cortaderia selloana* (Schult.& Schult.F.) Asch.& Grabn.], while others may be cut back to around 6 inches above the soil surface before each growing season. This would be early spring for warm-season grasses or late summer to early fall for cool-season grasses. Although this is not required, removing dead material can add to the looks of the grass. It is best to remove only dead material from bamboos, since bamboo culms are perennial. Perennial ornamental grasses generally do not require much tillage once established. You can mulch and maintain these grasses similar to other perennial ornamentals.

Weed Management in Ornamental Grasses

Ornamental grasses may be damaged by post-emergent graminicides, such as Fusilade (fluazifop-p-butyl) and Poast (sethoxydim). Don't use these on ornamental grasses unless the label specifically says so. Certain broadleaf and pre-emergent herbicides may be safe on ornamental grasses, but always check herbicide labels before use.

Herbaceous Ornamental Grasses for Midsouth Landscapes

Scientific Name ¹	Common Name ²	Comments ³	Origin of Species ⁴	Hardiness ⁵	Live Cycle	Physiology ⁶	Sun
<i>Andropogon gerardii</i> Vitm.	Big Bluestem	Upright	Native	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Andropogon gyrans</i> Ashe	Elliott's Bluestem	Upright, silky inflorescence	Native	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Andropogon ternarius</i>	Split Beard Bluestem	Upright, silky tufted inflorescence	Native	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Bouteloua gracilis</i> (HBK) Griffiths	Blue Grama	Fine, grayish foliage; arid species	SW Native	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Calamagrostis x acutiflora</i> (Schrad.) DC. CV.	Feather Reedgrass	Karl Foerster and other cultivars; cool locations	Hybrid	Region	Perennial	Cool	Full-Part Shade
<i>Calamagrostis arundinacea</i> (L.) Roth	Reedgrass	Clumping; cool locations	Eur. to Asia Minor	Region	Perennial	Cool	Full-Part Shade
<i>Calamagrostis brachytricha</i> Steud.	Korean Feather Reedgrass	Clumping; cool locations	C. to E. Asia	Region	Perennial	Cool	Full-Part Shade
<i>Chasmanthium latifolium</i> (Michx.) Yates	North American Wild Oats	Bamboo-like foliage; pendant spikelets	Native; Eastern U.S.	Region	Perennial	Cool	Full-Part Shade
<i>Coix lacryma-jobi</i> L.	Job's Tears	Novelty; fruit used for beads	SE Asia	Zone 9	Annual	Warm	Full
<i>Cortaderia selloana</i> (Schult.& Schult.F.) Asch.& Grabn.	Pampas Grass	Escaped in SW. White and pink flower forms	South America	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Cortaderia selloana</i> 'Gold Band'	Gold Band Pampas Grass	Gold-margined form	Cultivar	Zone 8	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Cortaderia selloana</i> 'Pumila'	Dwarf Pampas Grass	Dwarf form	Cultivar	Zone 8	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Cortaderia selloana</i> 'Silver Stripe'	Silver Stripe Pampas Grass	White variegated form	Cultivar	Zone 8	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Cymbopogon citratus</i> (DC. Ex Nees) Stapf	Lemon Grass	Lemon scented and grown as herbs	India, Ceylon	Zone 9	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Elymus canadensis</i> L.	Canada Wild Rye	Gray foliage; bottlebrush inflorescence	N.A.	Region	Perennial	Cool	Full-Part Shade
<i>Elymus virginicus</i> L.	Virginia Wild Rye	Greenish foliage; bottlebrush inflorescence	N.A.	Region	Perennial	Cool	Full-Part Shade
<i>Eragrostis curvula</i> (Schrad.) Nees	Weeping Lovegrass	Invasive in W.; fine basal foliage; open inflorescence	Southern Afr.	Zone 7	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Eragrostis spectabilis</i> (Pursh) Steud.	Purple Lovegrass	Native with reddish inflorescence	Native; SE U.S.	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Festuca amethystina</i> L. 'Bronzeglanz'	Bronze Glazed Tufted Fescue	Clumps similar to blue fescue, but more purple	C. Eur.	N. Region	Perennial	Cool	Full
<i>Festuca ovina</i> L. var. <i>glauca</i> (Lam.) Hackel	Blue Fescue	Clumps of blue-gray foliage; short	North Temperate	N. Region	Perennial	Cool	Full
<i>Glyceria maxima</i> (Hartm.) Holmb.	Reed Mannagrass	Use variegated varieties for best show	Temperate Eurasia	Region	Perennial	Cool	Full
<i>Hakonechloa macra</i> (Munro) Mak.	Japanese Forest Grass	Use variegated cultivars, like 'Aureola' for best show	Japan	Region	Perennial	Cool	Full-Part Shade
<i>Holcus mollis</i> L.	Creeping Softgrass	Use variegated varieties for best show	Eur.	N. Region	Perennial	Cool	Full-Part Shade
<i>Hordeum jubatum</i> L.	Squirrel-tail Barley	Invasive in other regions; bottlebrush inflorescence	North Temperate	N. Region	Annual	Cool	Full

Scientific Name ¹	Common Name ²	Comments ³	Origin of Species ⁴	Hardiness ⁵	Live Cycle	Physiology ⁶	Sun
<i>Hystrich patula</i> Moench.	Bottle-brush Grass	Tufted perennial with bottlebrush inflorescence	Native; E.N.A.	N. Region	Perennial	Cool	Full-Part Shade
<i>Miscanthus floridulus</i> (Labill.) Warb.	Maidengrass	Tall, stems pronounced, rhizomatous (spreading) species	SE Asia	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Miscanthus oligostachyus</i> Stapf. 'Purpureus' Hackel	Small Maidengrass	Small; green foliage with reddish fall color	Japan	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Miscanthus sacchariflorus</i> (Maxim.) Hackel	Amur Silver Grass	Tall, rhizomatous (spreading) species	Asia	Zone 8	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Miscanthus sacchariflorus</i> 'Robustus'	Large Amur Silver Grass	Larger, rhizomatous (spreading) species	Asia	Zone 8	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Miscanthus sinensis</i> Anders. *	Maidengrass, Jap. Silver Grass	Many cultivars. Avoid using multiple cultivars together	E. Asia	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Miscanthus sinensis</i> Anders. 'Adagio'	Adagio Maidengrass	Dwarf form	E. Asia	Zone 7	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Miscanthus sinensis</i> Anders. 'Autumn Light'	Autumn Light Maidengrass	Standard form	E. Asia	Zone 7	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Miscanthus sinensis</i> Anders. 'Cabaret'	Cabaret Maidengrass	Longitudinally white variegated midribs; large plant	E. Asia	Zone 7	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Miscanthus sinensis</i> Anders. var. <i>condensatus</i> *	Coastal Maidengrass	Coastal variety	E. Asia	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Miscanthus sinensis</i> Anders. 'Cosmopolitan'	Cosmopolitan Maidengrass	Longitudinally white variegated margins; large plant	E. Asia	Zone 7	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Miscanthus sinensis</i> Anders. 'Gold Bar'	Gold Bar Porcupine Grass	Dwarf, 36" tall, with horizontal yellow bands, burgundy plumes	E. Asia	Zone 5	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Miscanthus sinensis</i> Anders. 'Goldfeder'	Goldfeder Maidengrass	Longitudinally gold variegated foliage	E. Asia	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Miscanthus sinensis</i> Anders. 'Gracillimus'	Slender Maidengrass	Compact, narrowleaf form	E. Asia	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Miscanthus sinensis</i> Anders. 'Graziella'	Graziella Maidengrass	Green, large, upright, early flowering	E. Asia	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Miscanthus sinensis</i> Anders. 'Kirk's Dwarf'	Kirk's Dwarf Maidengrass	Small plant; transverse cream-gold variegated leaves	E. Asia	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Miscanthus sinensis</i> Anders. 'Morning Light'	Morning Light Maidengrass	Slender, longitudinally white variegated leaves	E. Asia	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Miscanthus sinensis</i> Anders. 'Sarabande'	Sarabande Maidengrass	Slender green leaves	E. Asia	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Miscanthus sinensis</i> Anders. 'Silberfeder'	Silver Feather Maidengrass	Green foliage; silver inflorescence	E. Asia	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Miscanthus sinensis</i> Anders. 'Silberpfel'	Silver Arrow Maidengrass	Longitudinally white variegated	E. Asia	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Miscanthus sinensis</i> Anders. 'Strictus'	Porcupine Maidengrass	Upright; transversely cream variegated	E. Asia	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Miscanthus sinensis</i> Anders. 'Variegatus'	Variegated Maidengrass	Longitudinally white variegated; standard form	E. Asia	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Miscanthus sinensis</i> Anders. 'Yaku Jima'	Yaku Jima Maidengrass	Dwarf narrowleaf form	Japan	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Miscanthus sinensis</i> Anders. 'Zebrinus'	Zebragrass	Transversely cream variegated; standard form	E. Asia	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full

Scientific Name ¹	Common Name ²	Comments ³	Origin of Species ⁴	Hardiness ⁵	Live Cycle	Physiology ⁶	Sun
<i>Miscanthus transmorisonensis</i> Hayata*	Taiwanese Maidengrass	Small; evergreen foliage; early flowering	Taiwan	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Muhlenbergia capillaris</i> (Lam.) Trin.	Purple Muhly	Fine basal foliage, red inflorescence	Native	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Muhlenbergia dumosa</i> Scribn. ex Vasey	Bamboo Muhly	Fine foliage on bamboo-like culms	SW Native	Zone 8	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Muhlenbergia lindheimeri</i> Hitchc.	Lindheimer Muhly	Clumping with fine grayish foliage.	SW Native	Zone 7	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Muhlenbergia rigens</i> (Benth.) Hitchc.	Deegrass	Fine basal foliage; arid species	Native; California	Zone 8	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Panicum virgatum</i> 'Cloud Nine'	Cloud Nine Switchgrass	Gray leaf form	Native	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Panicum virgatum</i> L. 'Hanse Herms'	Hanse Herms Switchgrass	Red leaf form	Native	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Panicum virgatum</i> 'Heavy Metal'	Heavy Metal Switchgrass	Gray leaf form	Native	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Panicum virgatum</i> 'Northwind'	Northwind Switchgrass	Gray leaf form	Native	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Panicum virgatum</i> 'Prairie Sky'	Prairie Sky Switchgrass	Gray leaf form	Native	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Panicum virgatum</i> 'Rehbraun'	Rehbraun Switchgrass	Red fall color	Native	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Panicum virgatum</i> 'Rotstrahlbusch'	Rotstrahlbusch Switchgrass	Red leaf form	Native	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Panicum virgatum</i> 'Shenandoah	Shenandoah Switchgrass	Red leaf form	Native	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Pennisetum alopecuroides</i> (L.) Spreng. *	Dwarf Fountaingrass	Clumping; dark bottlebrush inflorescence	E. Asia to W. Australia	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Pennisetum incomptum</i> Nees ex Steud.	Spreading Fountaingrass	Rhizomatous with upright whitish bottlebrush inflorescences	China, Himalayas	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Pennisetum macrostachyum</i> (Brongn.) Trin. 'Burgundy Giant'	Burgundy Giant Fountaingrass	Large, purpleleaved form; commonly grown as summer annual	East Indies	Zone 9	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Pennisetum orientale</i> Rich.	Oriental Fountaingrass	Clumping; white-pink bottlebrush inflorescences	Asia to India	Zone 7	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Pennisetum setaceum</i> (Forssk.) Choiv.	Tender Fountaingrass	Clumping; white-purple bottlebrush inflor.; foliage green-purple	Afr. to SW Asia	Zone 9	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Pennisetum villosum</i> R.Br. ex Fries	Feathertop	Clumping; white bottlebrush inflorescences; foliage green	NE Tropical Afr.	Zone 8	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Phalaris arundinacea</i> L. 'Feesey'	Feesey's Ribbon Grass	Less invasive variegated form; others are available	S. Afr., Eurasia, N.A.	N. Region	Perennial	Cool	Full
<i>Piptochaetium avenaceum</i> (L.) Parodi	Black-seed needlegrass	Fine basal foliage, dark inflorescence	Native	Region	Perennial	Cool	Full-Part Shade
<i>Pogonatherum paniceum</i> Trin.	Bamboo Grass	Small bamboo-like grass for novelty, grown as an annual	India, China, Malaysia	Zone 9	Perennial	Warm	Full-Part Shade
<i>Rhynchelytrum repens</i> (Willd.) C.Hubb.	Ruby or Natal Grass	Grown for pink inflorescences, usually as an annual	Tropical Afr.	Zone 8	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Saccharum arundinaceum</i> Retz.	Hardy Sugarcane	Very large with gray foliage and silky plumes	India to Malaysia	Zone 7	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Saccharum giganteum</i> (Walt.) Pers.	Sugarcane Plumegrass	Wetland grass, silky plumes	Native	Zone 7	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Saccharum officinarum</i> L. 'Pele's Smoke'	Pele's Smoke Sugarcane	Purple leaf form of sugarcane	SE Asia	Zone 9	Perennial	Warm	Full

Scientific Name ¹	Common Name ²	Comments ³	Origin of Species ⁴	Hardiness ⁵	Live Cycle	Physiology ⁶	Sun
<i>Schizachyrium littorale</i> (Nash) C. Bickn.	Coastal Little Bluestem	Gray foliage; dunes	Native	Coastal	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i> (Michx.) Nash 'Taos'	Taos Little Bluestem	Improved fall color	Native	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i> 'The Blues'	The Blues Little Bluestem	Gray leaf form	Native	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Setaria palmifolia</i> (Koenig) Stapf*	Palm Grass	Large with palm-like leaves; grown as annual in cooler zones	Tropical Asia	Zone 9	Perennial	Warm	Full-Part Shade
<i>Sorghastrum nutans</i> (L.) Nash 'Sioux Blue'	Sioux Blue Indiangrass	Gray leaf form	Native	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Spartina cynosuroides</i> (L.) Roth	Big Cordgrass	Salt marsh, large clump former	Native	Coastal	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Spartina pectinata</i> Link 'Aureomarginata'	Variegated Prairie Cordgrass	Golden margined cultivar; wetland species; can be invasive	Native; C. N.A.	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Sporobolus heterolepis</i> (A. Gray) A. Gray	Prairie Dropseed	Fine basal foliage in clumps	Native in Arkansas	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Sporobolus junceus</i> (P. Beauv.) Kunth	Piney Woods Dropseed	Fine basal foliage in clumps often grayish in color	Native	Region	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Stenotaphrum secundatum</i> (Walt.) Kuntze 'Variegatum'	St. Augustinegrass	Variegated form of southern turfgrass, not very hardy	Tropical	Zone 9	Perennial	Warm	Full-Part Shade
<i>Stipa (Austrostipa) elegantissima</i> Labill.	Australian Needlegrass	Clumping, very fine leaved feather grass; arid species	Temperate Australia	Zone 8	Perennial	Cool	Full
<i>Stipa gigantea</i> Link	Giant Feather Grass	Large, clumping feather grass; arid species	SW Eur., NW Afr.	Zone 8	Perennial	Cool	Full
<i>Stipa tenuissima</i> Trin.	Mexican Feather Grass	Clumping, very fine leaved feather grass; arid species	SW U.S., Mex., Argentina	Zone 7	Perennial	Cool	Full
<i>Thysanolaena maxima</i> (Roxb.) Kuntze	Bamboo Grass	Bamboo-like, but different subfamily (Arundoideae)	Tropical Asia	Zone 9	Perennial	Cool	Full-Part Shade
<i>Uniola paniculata</i> L.	Sea Oats	Tall, rhizomatous perennial grass of coastal dunes	Native; E U.S., W. Indies	Coastal	Perennial	Warm	Full
<i>Zizania aquatica</i> L.	Wild Rice	Tall, aquatic annual; used for food by Native Americans	Native; N.A.	Region	Annual	Cool	Full
<i>Zizaniopsis miliacea</i> (Michx.) Döll & Asch.	Southern Wild Rice	Tall, aquatic perennial; spreads and can be invasive	Native; SE N.A.	Region	Perennial	Cool	Full

¹Latin name followed by authority and cultivar or variety where applicable. Not an exhaustive list of species, but species familiar to lead author. "*" = Caution, exotic species that can be invasive.

²Not a complete list of common names.

³General comments for assistance with placement and cultivation.

⁴Origin of species, not cultivar. Afr.=Africa; C.=Central; E=Eastern; Eur.=Europe; Mex.=Mexico; N.A.=North America; NW=Northwest; S=South; SE=Southeast; SW=Southwest; W=West; U.S.=United States.

⁵Hardiness refers to USDA Plant Hardiness Zones. Region refers to species hardy throughout the MidSouth region.

⁶Physiology refers to cool- or warm-season grasses. Cool-season (C₃) grasses often do not perform well in hot, humid weather.

Bamboos for Midsouth Landscapes

Scientific Name¹	Common Name²	Comments³	Species Origin⁴	Hardy⁵
<i>Arundinaria gigantea</i> (Walt.) Muhl.	Native Cane	Native bamboo. Can be aggressive.	Native	Region
<i>Bambusa multiplex</i> (Lour.) Rausch. 'Alphonse Karr'	Alphonse Karr Hedge Bamboo	Upright clumper with variegated culms.	S. China	Zone 9
<i>Bambusa multiplex</i> 'Fernleaf'	Fernleaf Hedge Bamboo	Upright clumper with tiny leaves.	S. China	Zone 9
<i>Bambusa multiplex</i> 'Golden Goddess'	Golden Goddess Hedge Bamboo	Upright clumper with golden culms.	S. China	Zone 9
<i>Bambusa multiplex</i> 'Riviereorum'	Chinese Goddess Hedge Bamboo	Upright clumper with slender culms.	S. China	Zone 9
<i>Bambusa multiplex</i> 'Silver Stripe'	Silver Stripe Hedge Bamboo	Upright clumper with variegated leaves.	S. China	Zone 9
<i>Bambusa ventricosa</i> McClure	Buddha Belly Bamboo	Upright clumper with swollen internodes	S. China	Zone 9
<i>Bashania fargesii</i> (E.G. Camus) Keng f. & T.P. Yi	Wind Break Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: ~20 feet.	China	Zone 7
<i>Chimonobambusa quadrangularis</i> (Fenzl) Mak.	Square Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: ~20 feet.	SE China, Taiwan	Zone 9
<i>Chimonobambusa marmorata</i> (Mittord) Mak. 'Variegata'	Kan-Chiku	Caution: Spreader. Height: ~5 feet.	Japan?	Zone 8
<i>Hibanobambusa tranquillans</i> (Koidz.) Maruyama & H. Okamura 'Shiroshima'	Shiroshima Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: ~15 feet.	Japan	Zone 7
<i>Indocalamus harnadae</i> (Hatus.) Stapleton (Syn. <i>I. tessellatus</i> f. <i>harnadae</i> (Munro) Keng)	Hamada Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: ~10 feet.	Japan	Zone 6
<i>Indocalamus latifolius</i> (Keng) McClure	Broadleaf Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: 10 feet.	E. China	Zone 7
<i>Indocalamus tessellatus</i> (Munro) Mak. & Shib.	Tessellated Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: ~10 feet.	C. China	Zone 6
<i>Phyllostachys angusta</i> McClure	Stone Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: ~20 feet.	China	Zone 6
<i>Phyllostachys atrovaginata</i> C.S. Chao & H.Y. Zhou (Syn. P. <i>congesta</i> Rendle)	Incense Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: 35 feet.	China	Zone 6
<i>Phyllostachys aurea</i> (Carr.) A. & C. Riv.	Golden Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: ~20 feet.	SE China	Zone 7
<i>Phyllostachys aureosulcata</i> McClure	Goldengroove Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: 30 feet. Culm sulca golden.	NE China	Zone 5
<i>Phyllostachys bambusoides</i> Sieb. & Zucc.	Giant Timber Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: Over 50 feet	China, Japan?	Zone 7
<i>Phyllostachys bambusoides</i> 'Castillon'	Castillon Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: 35 feet. Variegated culms.	China, Japan?	Zone 7
<i>Phyllostachys bissetii</i> McClure	David Bisset Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: ~25 feet	China	Zone 6
<i>Phyllostachys decora</i> McClure	Beautiful Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: 30 feet.	China	Zone 6
<i>Phyllostachys dulcis</i> McClure	Sweetshoot Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: 40 feet.	China	Zone 6
<i>Phyllostachys edulis</i> (Carr.) Houz.	Moso	Caution: Spreader. Height: ~50 feet.	China	Zone 7
<i>Phyllostachys flexuosa</i> (Carr.) A. & C. Riv.	Zig-zag Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: ~20 feet.	China	Zone 6
<i>Phyllostachys glauca</i> McClure	Smooth Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: ~30 feet.	China	Zone 6
<i>Phyllostachys heteroclada</i> D. Oliver ex Hook. (Syn. P. <i>purpurata</i> McClure)	Water Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: 30 feet.	China	Zone 6
<i>Phyllostachys iridescens</i> C. Y. Yao & S. Y. Chen	Cock Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: Over 40 feet.	China	Zone 6

Scientific Name ¹	Common Name ²	Comments ³	Species Origin ⁴	Hardy ⁵
<i>Phyllostachys meyeri</i> McClure	Meyer's Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: 30 feet.	China	Zone 7
<i>Phyllostachys nidularia</i> Munro	Nidularia Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: ~30 feet.	N. & C. China	Zone 7
<i>Phyllostachys nigra</i> (Lodd. ex Lindl.) Munro	Black Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: ~30 feet. Black culms.	E. & C. China	Zone 7
<i>Phyllostachys nigra</i> 'Bory'	Tiger Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: ~50 feet. Culms with gold patches.	E. & C. China	Zone 7
<i>Phyllostachys nigra</i> 'Henon'	Henon Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: 50 feet. Green culms, larger.	E. & C. China	Zone 7
<i>Phyllostachys nuda</i> McClure	Nude Sheath Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: 34 feet.	China	Zone 5
<i>Phyllostachys platyglossa</i> Z.P. Wang et Z.H. Yu	Gray Water Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: ~25 feet.	China	Zone 6
<i>Phyllostachys praecox</i> C.D. Chu & C.S. Chao	Early Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: ~30 feet.	China	Zone 7
<i>Phyllostachys rubromarginata</i> McClure	Red Margin or Reddish Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: ~55 feet.	China	Zone 7
<i>Phyllostachys stimulosa</i> H.R. Zhao & A.T. Liu	Stimulosa Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: 25 feet.	China	Zone 6
<i>Phyllostachys violascens</i> (Carr.) A. & C. Riv.	Violet Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: 30 feet.	China	Zone 6
<i>Phyllostachys viridis</i> (R.A. Young) McClure	Pigskin Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: 40 feet.	E. China	Zone 7
<i>Phyllostachys vivax</i> McClure	Chinese Timber Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: ~70 feet.	E. China	Zone 6
<i>Phyllostachys vivax</i> 'Aureocaulis'	Golden Vivax Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: ~45 feet.	E. China	Zone 6
<i>Pleioblastus chino</i> (Franch. & Savat.) Mak.	Angustifolia Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: ~10 feet.	C. Japan	Zone 7
<i>Pleioblastus distichus</i> (Mittford) Muroi & H. Okamura	Dwarf Fernleaf Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: 2 feet.	Japan?	Zone 6
<i>Pleioblastus fortunei</i> (Van Houtte) Nak.	Dwarf Whitestripe Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: ~3 feet	Japan?	Zone 7
<i>Pleioblastus gramineus</i> (Bean) Nak.	Gramineous Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: ~10 feet.	Japan, E. China	Zone 8
<i>Pleioblastus linearis</i> (Hackel) Nak.	Linearis Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: ~10 feet.	C. Japan	Zone 8
<i>Pleioblastus pygmaeus</i> (Miq.) Nak.	Pygmy Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: 2 feet.	Japan?	Zone 6
<i>Pleioblastus shibuyanus</i> Mak. & Nak.	Dwarf Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: ~7 feet.	Japan	Zone 6
<i>Pleioblastus simonii</i> (Carr.) Nak.	Medake, Woman Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: ~15 feet.	C. & S. Japan	Zone 7
<i>Pleioblastus viridistriatus</i> (Reg.) Mak.	Dwarf Greenstripe Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: ~3 feet.	China?	Zone 7
<i>Pseudosasa amabilis</i> (McClure) Keng	Tonkin Cane	Caution: Spreader. Height: ~30 feet	SE Asia	Zone 8
<i>Pseudosasa japonica</i> (Sieb. & Zucc. ex Steud.) Mak. ex Nak.	Arrow Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: ~15 feet.	Japan	Zone 7
<i>Pseudosasa japonica</i> 'Tsutsumiana'	Green Onion Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: 10 feet. Swollen internodes.	Japan	Zone 7
<i>Pseudosasa longiligula</i> T.H. Wen	Longiligula Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: ~20 feet.	China	Zone 7
<i>Sasa palmata</i> (Burb.) Camus	Palmleaf Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: ~5 feet.	Japan	Zone 7
<i>Sasa oshidensis</i> Mak. et Uchida	Oshidensis Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: 6 feet	Japan	Zone 6
<i>Sasa veitchii</i> (Carr.) Rehd.	Variiegated Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: ~3 feet.	Japan	Zone 6
<i>Sasaella masamuneana</i> (Mak.) Hatsusima & Muroi en Sugimoto 'Albostrata'	Whitestriped Dwarf Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: ~5 feet.	Japan	Zone 7

Scientific Name ¹	Common Name ²	Comments ³	Species Origin ⁴	Hardy ⁵
<i>Sasamorpha borealis</i> (Hackel) Nak.	Suzutake	Caution: Spreader. Height: ~5 feet.	Japan, China	Zone 6
<i>Semiarundinaria fastuosa</i> (Marliac ex Mitford) Mak. ex Nak.	Temple Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: ~30 feet.	S. Japan	Zone 6
<i>Semiarundinaria okuboi</i> Mak.	Okuboi Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: ~20 feet.	Japan	Zone 7
<i>Shibataea chinensis</i> Nak.	Chinese Shibataea	Caution: Spreader. Height: 5 feet	China	Zone 6
<i>Shibataea kumasaca</i> (Zoll. ex Steud.) Mak. ex Nak.	Ruscus-leaved Bamboo	Caution: Spreader. Height: 5 feet	China, Japan	Zone 6
<i>Shibataea lancifolia</i> C. H. Hu	Lanceleaf Shibataea	Caution: Spreader. Height: 5 feet	China	Zone 6
<i>Sinobambusa intermedia</i> McClure	Intermediate Bamboo	Slow spreader. Height: ~20 feet.	China	Zone 8

¹Latin name followed by authority and cultivar or variety where applicable. This is not an exhaustive list, but those with which the senior author is familiar. 'Syn.' = Commonly used synonyms.
²This is not a complete list of common names.

³General comments for assistance with placement and cultivation

⁴Origin of species, not necessarily cultivar. C.=Central; E=Eastern; N=Northern; NE=Northeast; S=Southern; SE=Southeast; ?=origin not certain.

Countries followed by a question mark (?) are possible countries of origin where origin is not known.

⁵Hardiness Zones refer to USDA Plant Hardiness Zones.

Alternatives to Exotic Invasive Grasses¹ for the Midsouth

Invasive Species	Comments on Invasives	Alternatives	Comments on Alternatives	Hardiness	Native ²
Bamboo [<i>Phyllostachys</i> spp.]	Spreaders, invasive and difficult to control when established. Not regulated in MidSouth.	<i>Arundinaria gigantea</i> (Walt.) Muhl.	Native bamboo, prefers damp soils.	Zone 5	Region
Cogongrass [<i>Imperata cylindrica</i> (L.) P.Beauv. 'Red Barron']	Federal Noxious Weed, State Noxious in AL, AR, MS. Includes Japanese bloodgrass and other cultivars.	<i>Panicum virgatum</i> L. 'Hanse Herms' <i>Panicum virgatum</i> 'Rotstrahlbusch'	Red leaf form of switchgrass. Red leaf form of switchgrass.	Zone 4 Zone 4	Region Region
Dwarf Fountaingrass [<i>Pennisetum alopecuroides</i> (L.) Spreng.]	Not regulated in MidSouth. May escape, particularly in damp conditions.	<i>Panicum virgatum</i> 'Shenandoah' <i>Muhlenbergia capillaris</i> (Lam.) Trin.	Red leaf form of switchgrass. Fine basal foliage, purple inflorescence.	Zone 4 Zone 5	Region Region
Maidengrass [<i>Miscanthus sinensis</i> Andersson]	Not regulated in MidSouth. May escape if multiple cultivars are planted together	<i>Sporobolus heterolepis</i> (A. Gray) A. Gray <i>Panicum virgatum</i> 'Rehbraun'	Fine basal foliage, purple inflorescence. Green to red leaf form of switchgrass.	Zone 3 Zone 5	W. AR Region
Maidengrass [<i>Miscanthus sinensis</i> var. <i>gracillimus</i> Hitchc.]	Same.	<i>Muhlenbergia capillaris</i>	Fine basal foliage, purple inflorescence.	Zone 5	Region
Purple Fountaingrass [<i>Pennisetum setaceum</i> (Forssk.) Choiv. Cultivars]	Problematic in western U.S., not regulated in MidSouth	<i>Muhlenbergia capillaris</i> <i>Sporobolus heterolepis</i>	Fine basal foliage, purple inflorescence. Fine basal foliage, purple inflorescence.	Zone 5 Zone 3	Region W. AR
Ravenna Grass [<i>Saccharum ravennae</i> (L.) L.]	Not regulated in MidSouth. Escapes via wind dispersed seed.	<i>Panicum virgatum</i> 'Cloud Nine' <i>Panicum virgatum</i> 'Heavy Metal' <i>Panicum virgatum</i> 'Northwind' <i>Panicum virgatum</i> 'Prairie Sky' <i>Saccharum giganteum</i> (Walt.) Pers. <i>Sorghastrum nutans</i> (L.) Nash 'Sloux Blue'	Gray leaf form of switchgrass. Gray leaf form of switchgrass. Gray leaf form of switchgrass. Gray leaf form of switchgrass. Sugarcane plume grass, prefers wet soils. Gray leaf form of indiagrass.	Zone 5 Zone 5 Zone 5 Zone 5 Zone 5 Zone 4	Region Region Region Region Region Region
Serrated Tussock [<i>Nassella dichotoma</i> (Nees) Hackel ex Arechav.]	Federal Noxious Weed, State Noxious in AR.	<i>Piptochaetium avenaceum</i> (L.) Parodi <i>Sporobolus heterolepis</i>	Fine basal foliage, dark inflorescence, long awns. Fine basal foliage, purple inflorescence.	Zone 6 Zone 3	Region W. AR

¹This is not an exhaustive list of exotic invasive grasses or alternatives, but it is provided as a guide to protect landowners from invasion and possible litigation.

²Hardiness Zones refer to USDA Plant Hardiness Zones. Region refers to species hardy throughout the Mid South region (AL, AR, LA, MS, & TN).

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