



## ORGANICALLY GREEN HORTICULTURAL SERVICES

### Fall Newsletter, 2015

#### Great Grasses!

In general, when we think of a garden, we think of annuals, perennials, shrubs, maybe some trees, but more often than not, we forget about ornamental grasses. Why ornamental grasses? Well most are low maintenance, requiring only to have the dead growth cut back in the early spring and occasionally divided every few years to maintain vigor. They also come in many different forms, sizes and colors, some having multi-season interest, making them a versatile plant for the landscape, containers and even as screening material.

One of the gems of the ornamental grass category is Foerster's feather reed grass (*Calamagrostis x acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster'). This



upright grass grows five to six feet tall-with its creamy tan inflorescences- and forms a neat clump; perfect as a screen or in a large container. It prefers full sun and an organic moist soil but once established would tolerate some drought.

The genus *Miscanthus* or maiden grass has many cultivars most suitable for screening, in a

mixed border or even as a focal point in the landscape. In general, they prefer full sun tolerating



some shade, and a well-drained soil. Their height and spread differing according to cultivar, but can be anywhere from four to eight feet tall and the spread from two to five feet or more. (However, as a side note they have demonstrated some

invasive tendencies in certain areas.)

*Miscanthus sinensis* 'Gracilimus' has a beautiful vase like shape with finely textured leaf blades and grows to six to eight feet tall, including the inflorescences. In late summer, the plumes emerge purplish turning a creamy white that persists throughout the winter. The grass blades turn a bronze-tan color that also makes for good winter interest.

Another great maiden grass is *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Purpurascens' while similar in form to 'Gracilimus', this cultivar boasts outstanding orangey-purple fall color.





There are a few other cultivars worth mentioning such as *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Variegatus' with its creamy white and green blades and 'Strictus' with its horizontal gold bars amid rich green.



The next grasses on our must-have list are smaller in stature but are equally as attractive as their larger counterparts are.

The first is Japanese hakone grass, *Hakonechloa macra* 'Aureola'. This low growing grass has a golden color with cascading stems. It



prefers a partly shaded site with moist soil, growing only about six to eight inches high with a spread of twelve to eighteen inches. Its neat habit and

brightly colored foliage makes it perfect for use in woodland and rock gardens as well as along paths and walkways.



The switch grasses, in the genus *Panicum*. The species, *virgatum* – a North American prairie native- as well as some of the cultivars, all provide beautiful blueish-green stems with varying degrees of red tint at the tips and a neat upright habit that boasts airy pinkish flower clusters.

Their heights vary from two and half to six feet (with flower stems) and most prefer a sunny location although they will tolerate some shade, but will become more open. They tolerate moderately moist



*Panicum virgatum* 'Heavy Metal'

soil, some saying that they can tolerate wet soil as well, making them a perfect candidate for rain gardens, naturalized areas as well as in the perennial border.



*Panicum virgatum* 'Shenandoah'

A few of the more popular cultivars are 'Heavy Metal', which has a strong upright form and glaucous blue leaves. 'Shenandoah' develops a more reddish tint to its blades as the season progresses.

In keeping with blueish grasses, next is one of the blue fescue cultivars, *Festuca glauca* 'Boulder Blue'.

In general, the blue fescues keep their blue foliage throughout the year and are drought tolerant, preferring a sunny location with well-drained soil. They usually also benefit from dividing every few years to keep the clumps healthy.





They make small rounded clumps, most no taller than ten inches and in summer are topped with tan inflorescences. They are perfect in rock gardens along walkways and as an edge or in groups.

Finally, we also recommend this medium height -growing two to three feet tall- native grass, pink muhly grass, *Muhlenbergia capillaris*.



In early fall the grass produces these airy, pinkish-red flower heads, making a showy sight among the landscape. Pink muhly grass prefers full sun but will tolerate some shade and dry, poor soils with good drainage; making it perfect for mass plantings in poor sites as well as in a cottage or native plant garden.

No matter how ornamental grasses are used, in a mixed garden, in a natural setting or as a focal point along walkways or containers, having ornamental grasses provides your landscape with year-round interest.

## FUN Fact:

Near the autumnal equinox, there is usually a full moon, this moon known as the harvest moon as it gives farmers the ability to work later.

This year the harvest moon will appear as a super moon on September 27 and will feature a total lunar eclipse. The last time there was a super moon and total eclipse was in 1982 and it will not occur again until 2033!



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The Organically Green Team wishes you and your family a bountiful fall season!

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“Keep your love of nature, for that is the true way to understand art more and more.”

— Vincent van Gogh

## **Organically Grown**

### **Fall Vegetable Casserole**



#### **Ingredients:**

- 1 large organic onion, diced
- 3 cups mixed organic fall vegetables cut into bite-size pieces (carrots, parsnips, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, cauliflower)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 cup Organic Low Fat Plain Yogurt
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 cup grated cheddar cheese
- 1 cup panko (Japanese breadcrumbs)

#### **Directions:**

Preheat oven to 325°F. In a skillet over medium heat, sauté onion and vegetables in oil for 15-20 minutes. Place cooked vegetables in a colander to drain excess moisture and set aside. In a mixing bowl, combine yogurt, salt, pepper, garlic powder and cheddar cheese and fold together. Fold in vegetables. Pour into casserole dish and cover with breadcrumbs, press down on top of casserole to even out. Bake for 25-35 minutes.

*Note: We recommend using certified organic ingredients, when available, in all recipes to maximize flavors and nutrition while minimizing your risk of exposure to pesticides, chemicals and preservatives.*



## Plants for the Fall!

### September:

Sugar  
Maple  
(*Acer  
saccharum*)



- ❖ Large shade tree 75' to well over 100' tall.
- ❖ Form is upright, oval when younger and more or less gumdrop-shaped to rounded when mature.
- ❖ Excellent yellow, orange or red fall color.
- ❖ Prefers well-drained, moist fertile soils but does not perform well when root zone is restricted.
- ❖ Not tolerant of high heat, pollution, road salt.
- ❖ Although shade tolerant, full sun is needed for proper landscape development.
- ❖ Liabilities: dense shade which reduces turf vigor and can get verticillium wilt

- ❖ Good for shrub borders, groupings and mass plantings.
- ❖ Rejuvenate occasionally, especially following difficult winters.
- ❖ Liabilities: When not in fruit it is an ordinary shrub without multi-season appeal.

### November:

Russian  
Arborvitae  
(*Microbiota  
decussata*)



- ❖ Low growing spreading evergreen that has arching shoots with drooping tips; height 12" width up to 10'
- ❖ Best in full sun but tolerates part shade; needs well-drained soil.
- ❖ Turns a bronzy-purple color with exposure to cold and sun
- ❖ Useful as a groundcover, in groupings and for stabilization

### October:

Japanese  
Beautyberry  
(*Callicarpa  
japonica*)



- ❖ Multi-stemmed deciduous shrub with upright arching stems; 4' to 6' tall with an equal width; grows rapidly.
- ❖ Prefers full sun to light shade and well-drained soil, although relatively adaptable
- ❖ Very showy small metallic purple berries in rounded axillary clusters.

## *Services for 2015:*

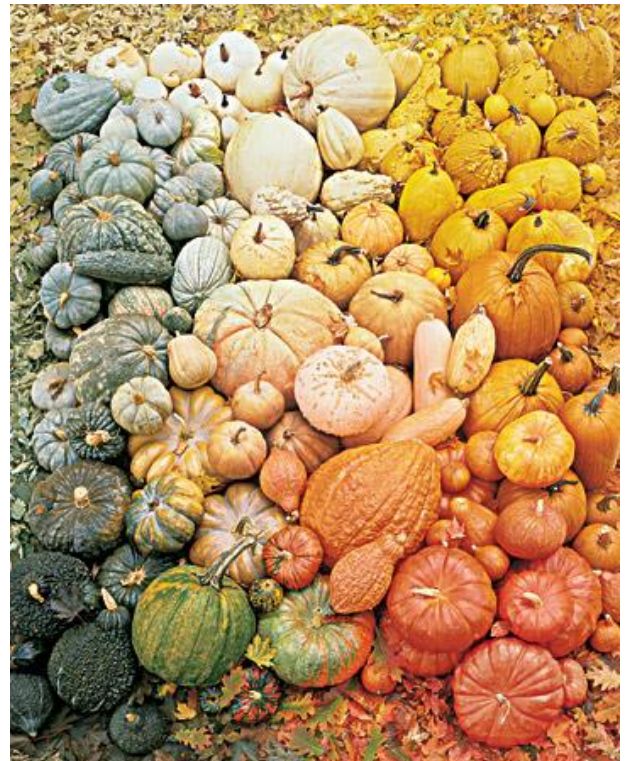
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- ❖ Shrub & Tree Spraying / Fertilization Programs
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- ❖ Soil Restoration
- ❖ Plant and Soil Stimulation Program
- ❖ Deep Root Feeding
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- ❖ Mature Tree Restoration
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- ❖ Radial Trenching
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- ❖ Anti-Desiccant Spraying
- ❖ General Tree and Shrub Maintenance

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- ❖ Core Aeration
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