

Embassy Favorites

A garden scene featuring various ornamental grasses and plants. In the foreground, there are clumps of tall, thin grasses with feathery, light-colored seed heads. Behind them are larger clumps of green grasses with long, arching blades. The plants are set against a dark wooden fence. To the left, a portion of a red wall is visible. In the background, a building with windows and a brick base is partially seen. The text "Embassy Favorites" is overlaid in the center in a white font with an orange outline.

Side Oats Grama *Bouteloua curtipendula*



Zone: 4 - 9

Season: warm

Height: 1.5 to 2.5 ft

Light: full sun

Moisture: dry to medium

Native

Add an interesting texture to the garden with a sprinkling of Side Oats Grama. Clusters of purple flowers appear on arching stems in early to mid summer, slowly changing to oat-colored seed pods which hang on one side of the stalk. The summertime blue-grey leaves turn shades of red and orange for a fall show. Birds feed on the seeds throughout the winter.

Blue Grama *Bouteloua gracilis*

Zone: 3 - 10

Season: warm

Height: .75 – 2 ft

Light: full sun

Moisture: dry to medium

Native



One of the more distinctive native grasses, Blue Grama- or mosquito grass- features side hanging seed pods that resemble mosquito larvae. Summer foliage is blue-ish grey, with clusters of light purple flowers appearing in early to mid summer.

Little Bluestem *Schizachyrium scoparium*



Zone: 3 - 9

Season: warm

Height: 2 - 4 ft

Light: full sun

Moisture: dry to medium

Native

Especially good for areas with poor soil, Little Bluestem Even tolerates Midwestern clay!

The foliage holds a tinge of blue in the summer and turns a bronze-orange shade in the fall. It sports purple flowers in late summer followed by fluffy white seed heads in the fall.

Prairie Dropseed *Sporobolus heterolepis*



Zone: 3 - 9

Season: warm

Height: 2 – 3 ft

Light: full sun

Moisture: dry to medium

Native

Distinctive in shape, Prairie Dropseed is a delicate looking, clump forming grass. It grows well in dry, rocky soils and has superior drought tolerance. Foliage turns a shade of golden orange in the fall. Seed heads drop tiny hulls to the ground in autumn, but the plant rarely self-seeds in the garden.

Indian Grass *Sorghastrum nutans*



Zone: 4 - 9

Season: warm

Height: 3 – 5 ft

Light: full sun

Moisture: dry to medium

Native

A perfect choice for an area with poor, dry or even infertile soils, Indian Grass will easily take root and grow. The upright clumps turn an orange-yellow in fall and hold color throughout the winter. Yellow flower clusters turn chestnut brown in the fall. Birds come to the seed heads all winter long.

Switch Grass *Panicum virgatum*



Zone: 5 - 9

Season: warm

Height: 3 – 6 ft

Light: full sun to pt. shade

Moisture: medium to wet

Native

Another grass for the bird lover, Switch Grass provides seed well into the winter. While it will tolerate some dry conditions, Switch Grass prefers moist, sandy or clay soils. Although it has a clumping habit, it does spread slowly by creeping rhizomes. Midsummer brings fine-textured, airy pink blooms.

Prairie Cord Grass *Spartina pectinata*



Zone: 4 - 9

Season: warm

Height: 4 – 7 ft

Light: full sun to pt. shade

Moisture: medium to wet

Native

Unlike many ornamental grasses, Prairie Cord grass does best in moist, fertile and loamy ground. The glossy, green leaves have sharp edges. Handle them with care! Summer flower stems rise above the leaves, showing off straw-colored blooms arranged in rows. Great for an attractive way to stabilize a pond edge.

Big Bluestem *Andropogon gerardii*



Zone: 4 - 9

Season: warm

Height: 4 – 6 ft

Light: full sun

Moisture: dry to medium

Native

Big Bluestem can be slow to establish itself, but once it does, it is drought tolerant and easy to maintain. The foliage has strong visual interest all season long. Leaves emerge grey-blue in spring, turn green with a tinge of red in summer and reddish-bronze in fall. Unique purplish flower clusters resembling turkey feet appear in late summer. It tends to be fairly deer resistant and gives excellent erosion control.

Maiden Grass *Miscanthus sinensis*



Zone: 4 - 9

Season: warm

Height: 4 – 8 ft

Light: full sun to pt shade

Moisture: average to moist

Non-native

Not just easy to grow, but a gorgeous addition to the winter garden as well. Featuring a graceful arching shape, it grows in slowly expanding clumps. The seed heads are attractive to birds.

Blue Lyme *Leymus arenarius*



Zone: 4 - 10

Season: cool

Height: 2 – 3 ft

Light: full sun to pt shade

Moisture: medium, well-drained

Non-native

Steel blue, arching leaves, upright blue-grey flower stalks in summer and bronze seedheads in fall make this one of the best grasses for difficult areas. It's perfect for erosion control since it spreads aggressively. Good container plant.

Feather Reed Grass *Calamagrostis acutiflora*



Zone: 5 - 9

Season: cool

Height: 3 – 5 ft

Light: full sun

Moisture: medium to wet

Non-native

Often used in rain gardens, Feather Reed Grass thrives in consistently moist soils. Its narrow, green leaves surround upright stalks bearing narrow but showy flower plumes of an unusual purplish-green color. Seed heads tend to remain throughout the winter months, adding interest to a somewhat bleak time of the year.

Blue Fescue *Festuca glauca*



Zone: 4 - 8

Season: cool

Height: 3 – 5 ft

Light: full sun

Moisture: dry to medium

Non-native

Blue Fescue may be the perfect ornamental grass for that difficult spot in the yard. It thrives in dry soil and full sun, showing off its fine-textured, blue-grey foliage. While it can be used as a ground cover, Blue Fescue is both short-lived and does not spread outward very quickly.