Wannemaker's
HOME AND GARDEN

1940 Ogden Ave
Downers Grove, IL
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Lightning Strike Variegated Reed Grass

Calamagrostis x acutiflora 'Lightning Strike'

Plant Height: 3 feet

Flower Height: 4 feet

Spread: 24 inches

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 3b

Other Names: Feather Reed Grass, Overdam Reed Grass

Description:

Dramatic purple-pink plumes rising above creamy white foliage with green margins make an appearance in the early summer months; looks wonderful in fresh or dried flower arrangements, borders, or garden landscapes; drought tolerant once established

Ornamental Features

Lightning Strike Variegated Reed Grass is primarily grown for its highly ornamental fruit. The tan seed heads are carried on showy plumes displayed in abundance from late summer to late winter. Its attractive grassy leaves are creamy white in color with distinctive green edges. The foliage often turns tan in fall. It features bold plumes of pink flowers with lavender overtones rising above the foliage in mid summer. The gold stems can be quite attractive.

Landscape Attributes

Lightning Strike Variegated Reed Grass is an herbaceous perennial grass with an upright spreading habit of growth. It brings an extremely fine and delicate texture to the garden composition and should be used to full effect.

This plant will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and is best cut back to the ground in late winter before active growth resumes. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Lightning Strike Variegated Reed Grass is recommended for the following landscape applications;



Lightning Strike Variegated Reed Grass foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Lightning Strike Variegated Reed Grass
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

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- Vertical Accent
- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Groundcover
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Lightning Strike Variegated Reed Grass will grow to be about 3 feet tall at maturity extending to 4 feet tall with the flowers, with a spread of 24 inches. It tends to be leggy, with a typical clearance of 1 foot from the ground, and should be underplanted with lower-growing perennials. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 10 years. As an herbaceous perennial, this plant will usually die back to the crown each winter, and will regrow from the base each spring. Be careful not to disturb the crown in late winter when it may not be readily seen!



Lightning Strike Variegated Reed Grass flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

This plant does best in full sun to partial shade. It is very adaptable to both dry and moist locations, and should do just fine under typical garden conditions. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This particular variety is an interspecific hybrid. It can be propagated by division; however, as a cultivated variety, be aware that it may be subject to certain restrictions or prohibitions on propagation.

Lightning Strike Variegated Reed Grass is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. With its upright habit of growth, it is best suited for use as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants and those that spill over the edges. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.