

NEBRASKA

STATEWIDE



Arboretum

Why use ornamental grasses?

- Ability to thrive despite Great Plains weather extremes and soil types
- Ornamental grasses requires little if any supplemental irrigation once established
- Ornamental grasses resist insect pests and disease.
- Provide critical habitat for local wildlife
- Deer, bunnies and grasshoppers don't eat them

Why use ornamental grasses?

- Sound & Movement
- Light & Translucency
- The Quality of Line
- Form, Texture & Scale
- Foliage & Flower Color

- Form, Texture & Scale





- Sound & Movement



Light & Translucency









Winter Beauty



The Quality of Line





Woody florals & ornamental grasses—together at last















Adding Ornamental Grasses

DON'T

- Design your grass garden with an automatic irrigation system. Avoid top watering.
- Mulch too deep. Provide a light 1-2" layer
- Space plants too far apart
- Mix grasses that aren't adapted to your site

What are Sedges?

- Sedges are grass-like plants from the Genus *Carex*. There are over 60 *Carex* species native to Nebraska!
- Of all the species, there is even one called Nebraska sedge.
- Many are strictly clump forming plants and others spread slowly by rhizomes.

- Native sedges are not yellow nutsedge!

Yellow nutsedge is native to Europe and is from the genus *Cyperus*.

SEDGES HAVE THE EDGES



Grass-like plants for Part-shade to Shade

Beauty in Utility

- Native sedges add form, texture, and color to dappled shade created by overstory trees.
- Woodland sedges are easy to grow, adaptable to soil types, drought tolerant.
- Sedges are not only functional, but ornamentally appropriate as well.

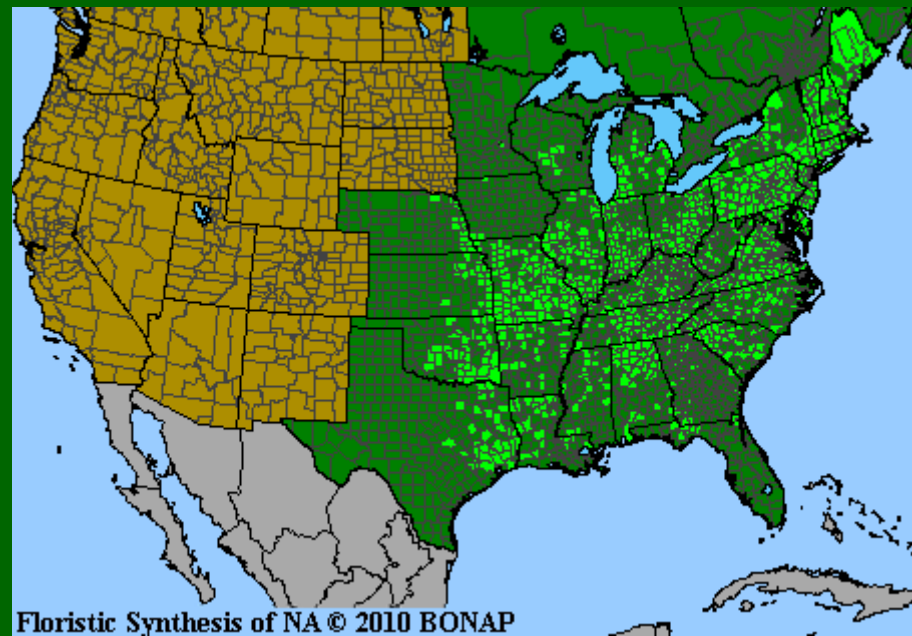
Dappled Shade



- Many woodland wildflowers are ephemeral
- Combine with shade tolerant grasses and sedges.

Oak Sedge, *Carex albicans*







'Appalachian Sedge, Carex 'Appalachica'





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Bristleleaf Sedge, *Carex eburnea*













Pennsylvania Sedge, *Carex pennsylvanica*





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Seersucker Sedge, *Carex plantaginea*



Curly-styled Wood Sedge, *Carex rosea*









Longbeak Sedge, *Carex sprengelii*

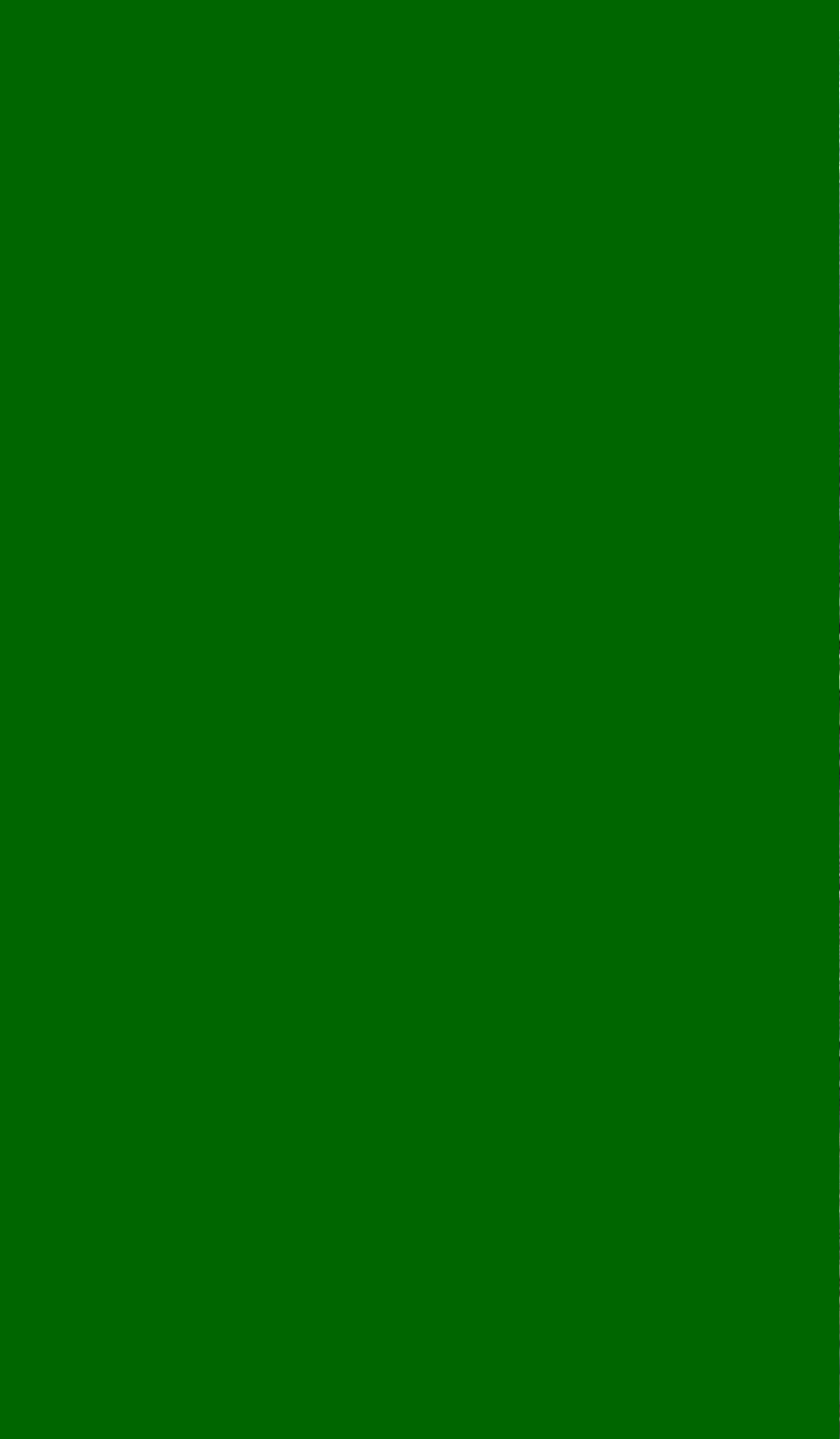












Sedge Lawn Alternatives



- Native sedges provide year-round vegetative cover without need for supplemental irrigation.
- Sedges can greatly reduce or eliminate the need for mowing. Reducing soil compaction and increasing water infiltration.
- Sedge meadows eliminate or greatly reduce the need for raking leaves. They fall and settle between the plants, providing nature's mulch.









Grasses for Part-shade



Korean Feather Reed Grass, *Calamagrostis brachytricha*







Silky Wildrye, *Elymus villosus*



Virginia Wildrye



Silky Wildrye



Bottlebrush Grass, *Hystrix patula*



Why use prairie grasses?

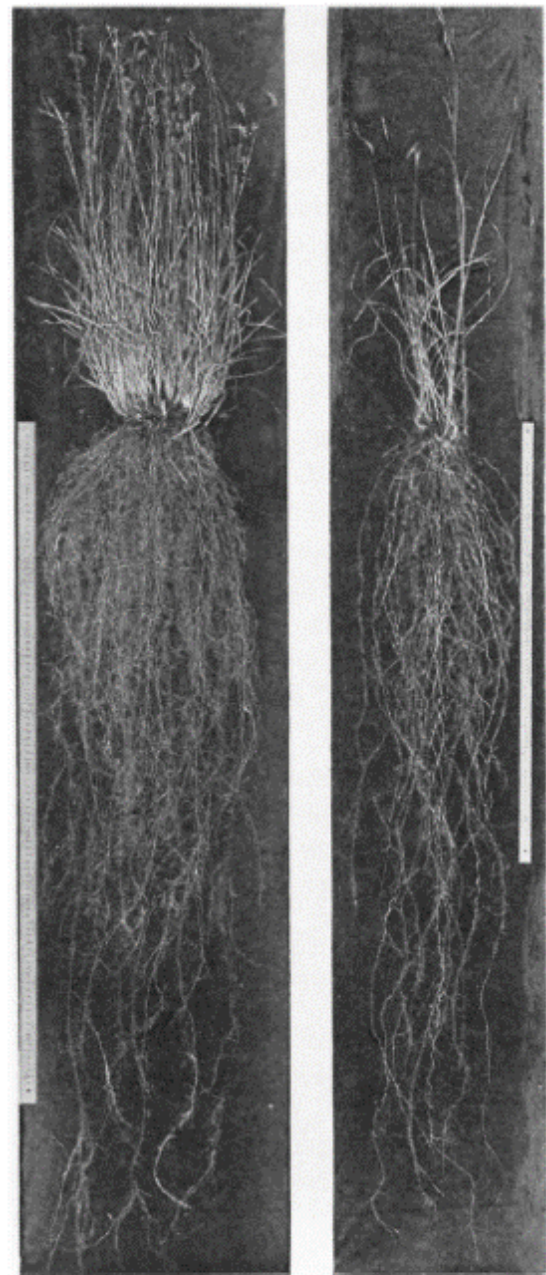
- Lowland prairie plants will help clean our water supply. Deep rooted prairie plants also have extensive surface roots that act as a filter
- If big prairie forbs are allowed to grow on their own, without competition from grasses, they soon take advantage by growing too big or spread too much.



2015/07/26/2015/07/26/2015/07/26/

1/3 of roots die at the end of growing season, adding organic matter to the soil.

Roots add nutrients while opening up spaces for water and air to penetrate.



FIGS. 6, 7.—Fig. 6 (left), roots and tops of mature *Andropogon scoparius* from high prairie; fig. 7 (right), roots and tops of mature *A. furcatus* from low prairie. Scale in both figures is a meter stick.

Sedges Have the Edges

There are many types of native sedge plants to choose from, but they offer the opportunity to renew natural landscapes while giving the gardener a hardy plant made for the region.

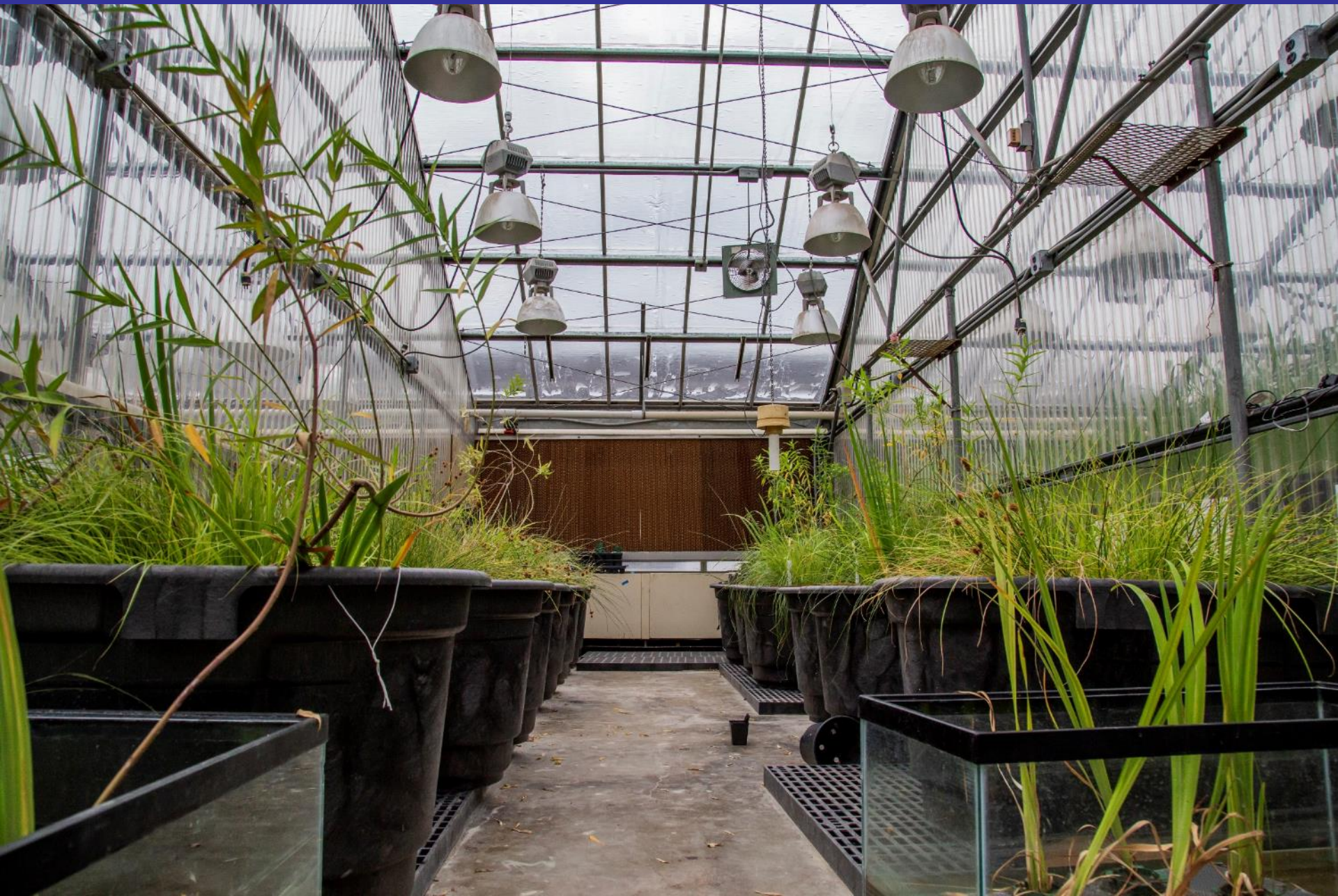
Why Native Sedges?

Carex have the ability to take up contaminants in the water. They not only take up significant amounts of N and P, but remove toxic heavy metals, so that the water that infiltrates or flows through is cleaner.

Sedges' grass-like leaf blades slow water movement, allowing time to clean the water, and their deep fibrous roots improve infiltration of water into the soil.

Sedges emerge in early spring, growing quickly into dense green tufts that work to out-compete winter annual weeds. The bright green mounds of foliage are a welcome site to a mostly dormant early spring landscape.

Floating Wetland Study~Dr. Tiffany Messer, UNL





Native Sedges Can Reduce Maintenance

Native sedges and rushes establish quickly, often reaching maturity by the end of the first growing season.

They are ideal for the lowest zone of the swale, plants that can thrive in standing water, while surviving periods of drought. Native sedges also meet the design criterion that requires low height vegetation for visibility.

They function as stabilizers, biological filters and provide food and shelter for wildlife. *Carex* species are not only functional, but is ornamentally appropriate as well. Finally, sedges are not bothered by deer, rabbits or grasshoppers—they don't like to eat them!



Wet Soils







Carex comosa, Longhair Sedge

Fringed Sedge, *Carex crinata*



Gray's Sedge, *Carex grayi*







Carex grayi





Porcupine Sedge, *Carex hystericina*



Carex muskingumensis, palm sedge





'Little Midge' palm sedge



Broom Sedge, *Carex scoparia*



Tussock Sedge, *Carex scribta*





FOX SEDGE, *Carex vulpiniodea*









Yellowfruited Sedge, *Carex annectens*





Cattail Sedge, *Carex squarrosa*

Short Prairie Grasses

for sunny, dry sites

1-3' in height



Prairie Sedge, *Carex bicknellii*

Plains Oval Sedge, *Carex brevior*





Texas Sedge, *Carex texensis*









Blue Grama Grass,
Bouteloua gracilis,









'Blonde Ambition' Blue Grama Grass



Sideoats Grama, *Bouteloua curtipendula*





Prairie Junegrass, *Koeleria macrantha*









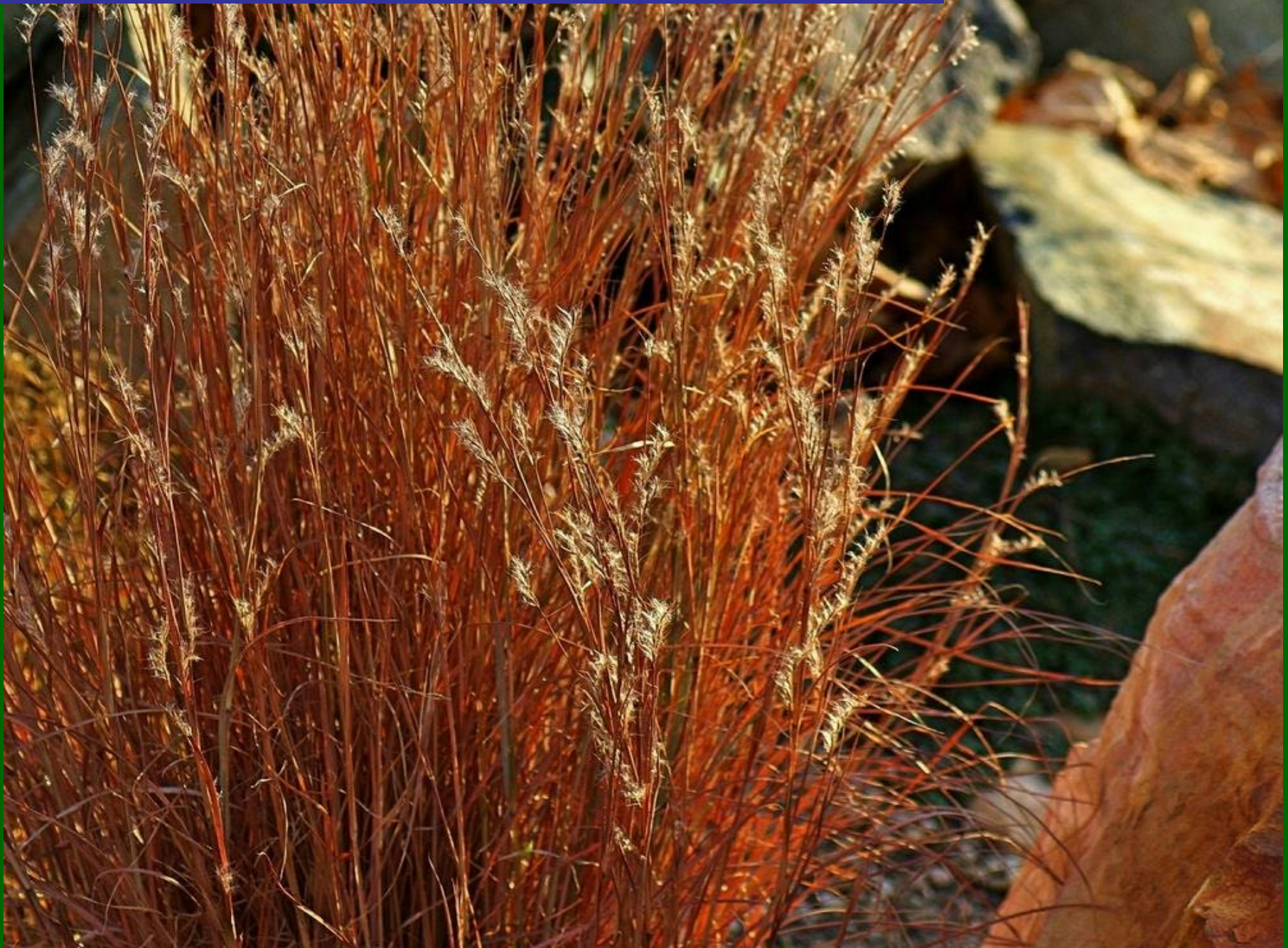
Little Bluestem, *Schizachyrium scoparium*







'Blaze' Little Bluestem







Blue Heaven® Little Bluestem





'Standing Ovation' Little Bluestem

'Prairie Winds' Little Bluestem





'Twilight Zone' Little Bluestem

'Carousel' Little Bluestem





'The Blues' Little Bluestem



Plains Muhly, *Muhlenbergia cuspidata*



Prairie Dropseed, *Sporobolus heterolepis*















Taller Grasses



Sand Bluestem, *Andropogon hallii*





Big Bluestem, *Andropogon gerardii*



'Pawnee' Big Bluestem

Turkey Foot Grass





It provides good cover for nesting and is a larval host for the Dotted Skipper (*Hesperia attalus*), and other skippers.





'Windwalker' Big Bluestem



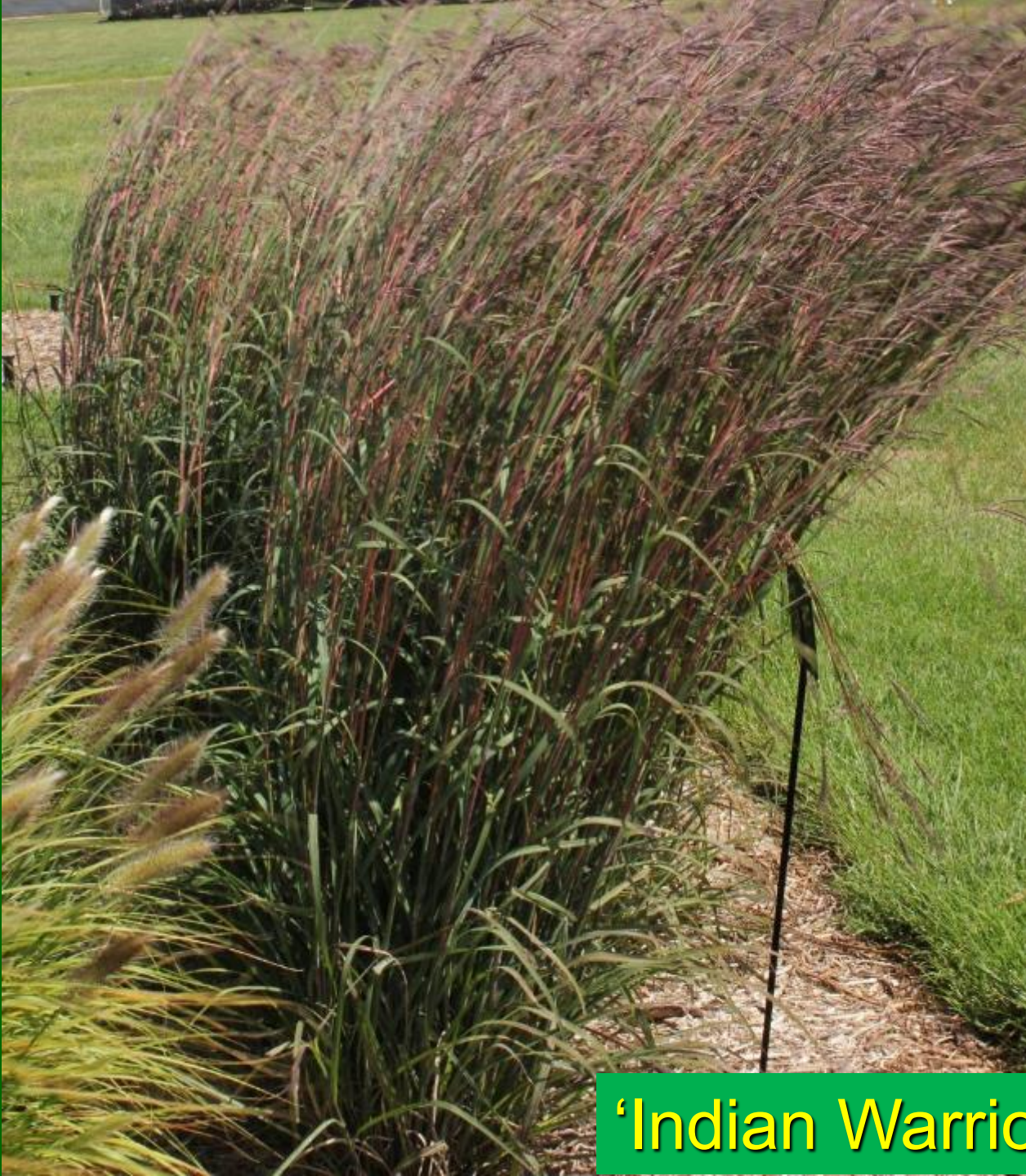
'Lord Snowdon' Big Bluestem



'Red October ' Big Bluestem



'Blackhawks' Big Bluestem



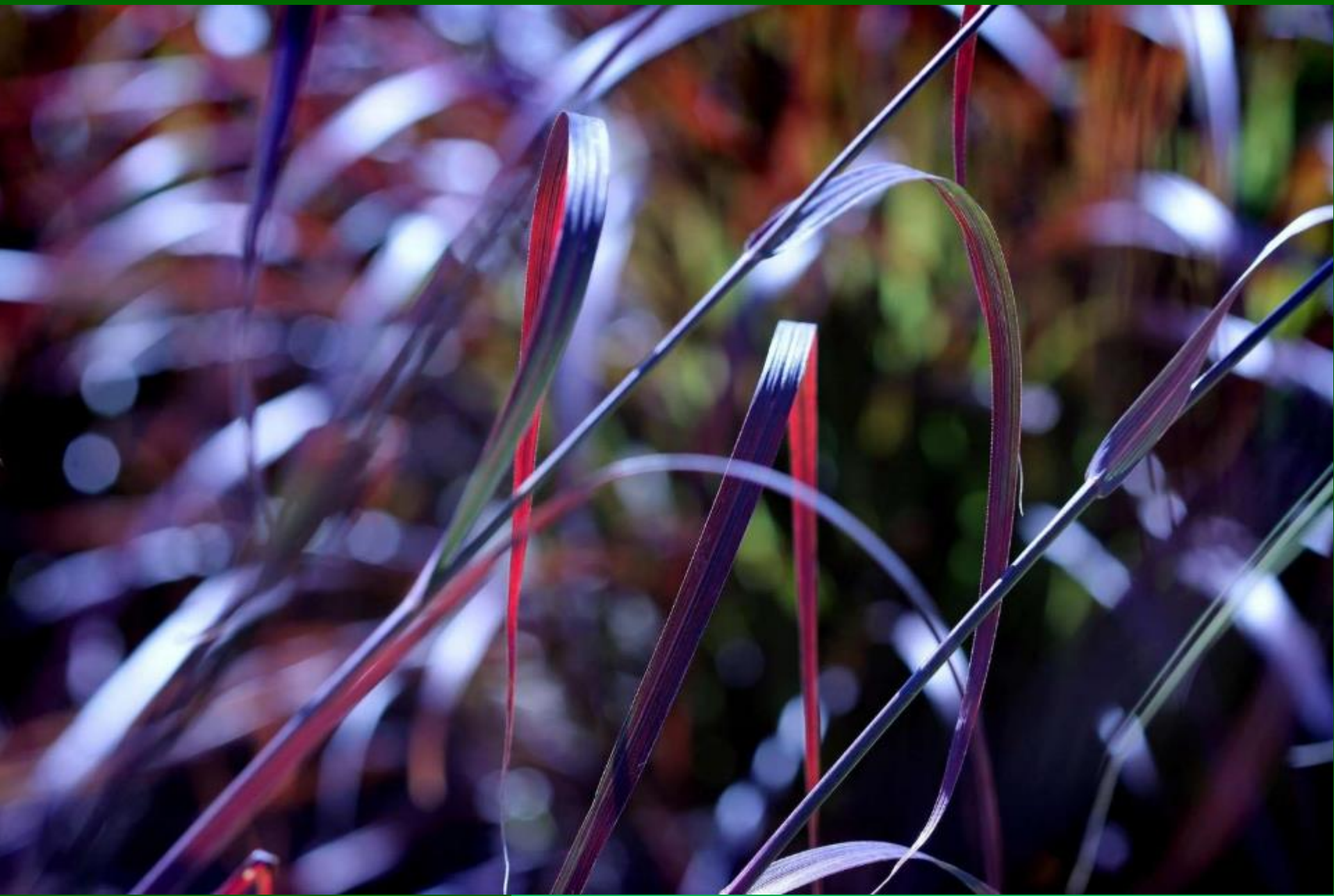
'Indian Warrior' Big Bluestem



'Red Bull' Big Bluestem



'Dancing Wind' Big Bluestem



'Rain Dance' Big Bluestem



Canada Wildrye, *Elymus canadensis*





Copyright Chris Helzer/The Nature Conservancy



Sand Lovegrass, *Eragrostis trichoides*











Indiangrass, *Sorghastrum nutans*







‘Dallas Blues’ Switchgrass, *Panicum virgatum*









'Heavy Metal' Switchgrass



'Northwind' Switchgrass

Switch Grass, *Panicum* 'Prairie Fire'





Non-Native Ornamental Grasses



Calamagrostis x acutiflora 'Karl Foerster',
Feather Reed Grass



'Avalanche' Feather Reed Grass



'Overdam' Feather Reed Grass



'Evergold' Sedge, *Carex oshimensis*



Ice Dance sedge, *Carex morrowii* 'Ice Dance'



Ribbon Grass, *Phalaris arundinacea* 'Picta'



Blue Fesque, *Festuca glauca* 'Elijah Blue'

'Sapphire' Blue Oat Grass, *Helictotrichon sempervirens*



- Height: 2-3'
Width: 2'
- Better blue color, disease resistance (especially to rust) and better tolerance for heat and humidity.
- Easy to grow, clump-forming, cool season.





Miscanthus or Maiden Grass



'Autumn Red' Miscanthus



'Morning Light' Miscanthus



'Variegated' Miscanthus



'Zebrinus' *Miscanthus*



Miscanthus giganteus



Ravenna Grass, *Saccharum ravennae*



Giant Reed Grass, *Arundo donax*



- 'SKYRACER'
- PURPLE MOOR GRASS
- *Molina caerulea*







2020 Grass of the Year



GIANT SAKATON, *Sporobolus wrightii*













AUTUMN MOOR GRASS, *Sesleria autumnalis*







knollgardens.co.uk



Chinese Pennisetum, *Pennisetum alopecuroides*



'Hameln' Chinese Pennisetum



Purple Fountain Grass



Little Bunny Fountain Grass





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