Ornamental Grass Demonstration Planting

RFR-A1724

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Introduction

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the performance of ornamental grasses in the turfgrass industry. For several years, feedback from the annual Turfgrass Field Day has been that attendees want to see various ornamental grasses at the field day. This planting was designed to give those interested in ornamental grass performance an idea of how the grasses look at various times of the year, the spread of the grasses, and to demonstrate their winter hardiness. It also was designed for classroom purposes, specifically for plant identification and landscape design classes.

Materials and Methods

This planting is located at the Iowa State University Horticulture Research Station, Ames, Iowa, and was designed so grasses were planted according to mature plant heights. The plots were arranged with potential mature grass height increasing from south to north (Figure 1). There are 21 different grasses in this planting ranging from 2-10 plants/10 ft^2. Plants include *Festuca glauca,* Elijah Blue; *Miscanthus sinensis,* Strictus; *Miscanthus sinensis,* Silberfeder; *Miscanthus sinensis; Schizachyrium scoparium,* The Blues; *Helictotrichon sempervirens,* Saphirsprudel; *Calamagrostis acutiflora,* Karl Foerster; *Calamagrostis acutiflora,* Overdam; *Miscanthus sinensis,* Adagio; *Pennisetum alopecuroides*; *Panicum virgatum,* Heavy Metal; *Panicum virgatum,* Shenandoah; *Molinia caerulea arundinacea,* Skyracer; *Deschampsia cespitosa,* Bronzeschleier; *Bouteloua curtipendula*; *Andropogon gerardii*; *Erianthus ravennae*; *Phalaris arundinaceae,* Strawberries & Cream; *Schizachyrium scoparium*, Blue Heaven. Two of the 21 have yet to be planted and they include a second cultivar of *Deschampsia cespitosa* and *Miscanthus floridulus*, Giganteus.

Results and Conclusion

No data was collected on this planting in 2017 as plants establish to this site. Observations will be made in 2018 on how many survive the winter and how well plants establish after a full year of growth. Some of the plants are considered marginally cold hardy in central Iowa, and it will be interesting to see if those plants survive the winter.

Acknowledgements

Appreciation is extended to the Iowa Turfgrass Institute for financial support of this project.

Miscanthus sinensis Adagio	Alley	*Erianthus ravennae*	Alley	*Miscanthus floridulus* Giganteus
		Alley		
Pennisetum alopecuroides		*Miscanthus sinensis* Silberfeder		*Miscanthus sinensis*
		Alley		
Calamagrostis acutiflora Overdam	Alley	*Miscanthus sinensis* Strictus	Alley	*Andropogon gerardii*
		Alley		
Calamagrostis acutiflora Karl Foerster		*Panicum virgatum* Heavy Metal		*Panicum virgatum* Shenandoah
		Alley		
Schizachyrium scoparium The Blues	Alley	*Molinia caerulea arundinacea* Skyracer	Alley	*Schizachyrium scoparium* Blue Heaven
		Alley		
Deschampsia cespitosa Bronzeschleier		*Deschampsia cespitosa*		*Phalaris arundinaceae* Strawberries & Cream
		Alley		
Festuca glauca Elijah Blue		*Helictotrichon sempervirens* Saphirsprudel		*Bouteloua curtipendula*

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Figure 1. Plot plan of ornamental grass demonstration planting at the Iowa State University Horticulture Research Station, 2017.