

# Schizachyrium scoparium

## Little Bluestem

Common through most of the Mid-Atlantic Region, native Little Bluestem gives a brilliant landscape performance. Tight, erect, spiky bluish-green stems and leaves transition to a sizzling fall display of oranges, reds, yellows and purplish-browns topped by fluffy seed heads that persist into winter.

Tried and True  
Native Plant Selections  
for the Mid-Atlantic



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Grass / Sedge	Summer Foliage, Racemes, Fall Foliage
Height: 1½–4 feet	
Spread: 1½–2 feet	
Bloom Color: Purplish-bronze	
Characteristics	
Bunched, erect, ornamental <u>perennial</u> grass	
Slender, often folded, linear, light blue or green leaves <u>alternate</u> on reddish or tan <u>culms</u> (stems); sheaths w/ long V-shaped opening; swollen, purplish <u>nodes</u>	
Fertile culms terminate in 1–3" long, ascending <u>racemes</u> of paired <u>spikelets</u> (one fertile <u>sessile</u> and one sterile on <u>pedicel</u> ) from June–October	
Fluffy, silvery-white seed heads July–November	
Bronze to rust fall color <u>persists</u> through winter	
Reseeds; sometimes spreads by short <u>rhizomes</u>	
Attributes	
Tolerates <u>clay</u> soil, poor soil, shade (somewhat), drought (extremely well), air pollution, and Black Walnut; intolerant of wetlands and flooding; no serious pests or diseases; <u>deer</u> rarely damage	
Winter interest	
Attracts birds to its seeds, especially in winter; <u>larval</u> host for various skippers; wildlife cover	
Growing and Maintenance Tips	Excellent Replacement for
<u>Soil Requirements</u> : Average, well-drained soil	<i>Agropyron cristatum</i> - Crested Wheatgrass
<u>Light Requirements</u> : Sun	<i>Bambusa</i> , <i>Phyllostachys</i> , <i>Pseudosasa</i> - Bamboo
<u>Water Requirements</u> : Dry	<i>Festuca arundinacea</i> - Tall Fescue
Cut to ground in late winter to early spring	<i>Miscanthus sinensis</i> - Chinese Silver Grass
Use as an accent or en masse in borders, meadow gardens, naturalized landscapes, or steep slopes	<i>Pennisetum alopecuroides</i> - Fountain Grass
<u>Hardiness</u> : USDA Zones 3–9	
<i>developed by Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, serving Arlington and Alexandria</i>	

Images by Mary Free, Sunny Garden



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