





# Schizachyrium scoparium

## Little Bluestem

Tried and True  
Native Plant Selections  
for the Mid-Atlantic

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.



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

Images by Mary Free, Sunny Garden