

Eragrostis spectabilis

Purple Lovegrass, Tumblegrass

Tried and True
Native Plant Selections
for the Mid-Atlantic

This native* of dune grasslands, prairies, barrens, and open woodlands is considered an important species for soil stabilization along roadsides. In home gardens, Purple Lovegrass is a lovely ornamental—its reddish-purple clouds of airy flowers are stunning in summer when backlit or sparkling with raindrops.



Grass	Clumps in July and September
Height: 1½–2½ feet	
Spread: 2–3 feet	
Bloom Color: Reddish-purple	
Characteristics	
Warm-season perennial bunch grass growing in dense tufts, dormant in winter	
Rigid, glabrous culms ; overlapping sheaths; leaves with parallel veins , mostly in basal clump, hirsute to sometimes glabrous turn bronze in fall	
Airy, green inflorescences (panicles) rise above foliage, turning reddish-purple, then tan July-Oct	
As fruit (caryopsis) mature, they fall off the plant	
Spreads by self-seeding and slowly by rhizomes	
Attributes	
Tolerates drought, Black Walnut, air pollution, salt, infertile, poor soil , and light foot traffic	
No serious pests or diseases	
Deer rarely severely damage but will eat the basal stem in winter in heavily grazed areas	
Inflorescences used in dried flower arrangements	
Birds eat seed; livestock graze on young plants; larval host to ~3 lepidopterans , incl. Zabulon skipper	
Growing and Maintenance Tips	Excellent Replacement for
Soil Requirements : Well-drained, sandy, gravelly	Pennisetum alopecuroides - Fountain Grass
Light Requirements : Sun	
Water Requirements : Dry, Moist	
Cut to ground and propagate by division in spring	
Use in borders, in meadows, as edging to paths	*In the Mid-Atlantic Region, it is native to DC, common in DE, found in the MD Piedmont and Coastal Plain, and concentrated mostly in southeastern PA. In VA, it is common in the Coastal Plain and Piedmont and frequent at lower mountain elevations.
Hardiness : USDA Zones 5a–9b	

developed by Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, serving Arlington and Alexandria

Images by Elaine Mills, private gardens, Arlington, VA



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