

Little Bluestem in the Landscape



Schizachyrium scoparium

Description

Perennial, warm season bunchgrass; blue-green foliage turning bronze in the fall. Flowers in mid to late summer; heads are tufted racemes. Plants can reach heights of up to 4 feet. This plant can be found naturally in desert surroundings, along waterways, and in rock crevices. This is a long-living plant that can be used ornamentally as a specimen, in a rock garden, or anywhere soil stabilization is desired. In winter, the seeds are favored by small birds.

Cultural Requirements

- **Native Habitat:** native all over the U.S. to prairies, dry hills, woodlands
- **Soil:** well drained, low fertility, pH 5.0-8.4
- **Cold Tolerance:** hardy to -38°F
- **Drought Tolerance:** high

- **Salt Tolerance:** not tolerant
- **Sun/Shade Preference:** full sun
- **Transplanting:** easy
- **Propagation:** seed or division
- **Maintenance:** crop to no less than 8 inches in early fall or late spring
- **Pest Problems:** no serious pest problems

Landscape Value

- **Use in the Landscape:** specimen, soil stabilization, wildlife protection and food source
- **Foliage:** showy, attractive fall color
- **Inflorescence:** fine-textured
- **Color:** summer: early July - mid-september; fall and winter: mid-september on
- **Fruit (seedheads):** feathery appearance when mature
- **Form:** upright, tight, vertical lines
- **Texture:** fine to medium
- **Ultimate Size:** 3 to 4 feet
- **Rate of Growth:** Moderate; full height in 2 years
- **Plant Community:** parkland, pinyon-juniper, cool-desert shrub
- **Availability:** "Utah's Choice" selection
- **Cultivars:** 'Blaze': compact, intense pink-orange fall color; 'The Blues': intense blue leaf color

Additional Photos

References

- Mee, W., J. Barnes, R. Kjelgren, R. Sutton, T. Cerny, and C. Johnson. 2003. *Waterwise: Native Plants for Intermountain Landscapes*. Utah State University Press, Logan, UT.
- USDA Plants Database. 2007. URL: <http://plants.usda.gov>.

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(function() { document.querySelectorAll('.carousel-control[data-slide="prev"]').forEach(function(prevControl)
{ prevControl.setAttribute('aria-label', 'Previous'); }); document.querySelectorAll('.carousel-control[data-
slide="next"]').forEach(function(nextControl) { nextControl.setAttribute('aria-label', 'Next'); });
document.addEventListener('DOMContentLoaded', function() { // Query all images within the fourColumnCarousel
inside embed-feed const images = document.querySelectorAll('.embed-feed .fourColumnCarousel .img-
fluid'); images.forEach(img => { // If the image alt attribute is empty or missing, set it to "Article thumbnail" if (!
img.getAttribute('alt') || img.getAttribute('alt').trim() === "") { img.setAttribute('alt', "Article thumbnail"); } }); }); // Closes
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