

Gulf Coast Muhly Grass (*Muhlenbergia capillaris*)

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Gulf Coast Muhly Grass (*Muhlenbergia capillaris*)

- **Recommended Use:** Landscape shrub, mass planting, native plantings
- **Exposure:** Full sun
- **Size:** 3 to 4 feet high, 3 to 4 feet wide
- **Habit:** Bunching and weeping
- **Bloom Time:** Fall
- **Maintenance Category:** Low
- **Water Use:** Low
- **Highlights:** This fast-growing native plant provides feather-like pink flowers in the fall, performs exceptionally well in dry, difficult soils, and is ideal for roadside plantings and erosion control.



Large masses of muhly grass are attractive when covering large swaths of land. LSU AgCenter file photo

Summary

Gulf Coast muhly grass, or simply muhly grass, is one of the absolute greatest ornamental grasses for Louisiana landscapes. This bunching grass is native to the entire Gulf Coast region and is often sought after for its hardiness and adaptability to our climate. Muhly grass is easy to grow, easy to propagate and grows rapidly in the landscape. Moreover, muhly grass is highly sought after for its attractive flower display in the fall. Muhly grass performs wonderfully as an ornamental grass throughout the spring and summer months, but the beautiful feather-like pink flowers that emerge in late summer/early fall are what attract attention. As fall turns to winter, the pink flowers maintain their eye-catching aesthetics well beyond those of most other ornamental grasses, making muhly grass one of our absolute favorite features in the landscape. Its adaptability to some of the harshest conditions in the landscape makes muhly grass a prime candidate for particularly challenging areas such as roadsides and near parking lots. Do not let their adaptability to difficult locations limit their use to these locations, as they are attractive enough to star in showcase landscapes.

These are perennial grasses and will come back year after year throughout Louisiana, oftentimes with very minimal maintenance required. Muhly grass can certainly be planted in isolation as a focal plant, but when arranged in mass plantings the stunning flower display steals the show. These mass plantings will amplify the flowering aesthetic, as they imitate large masses of fine-textured pink clouds (or white, if using 'White Cloud'). This is especially attractive when located on hillsides or in municipal areas covering large swaths of land.

Requirements

- Plant in sunny locations. Can tolerate some shade (at the expense of bloom quality) but prefers full sun.
- Soil can be dry or moist, but not waterlogged – very adaptable. Ensure adequate drainage.
- Soil pH is not a major factor for muhly grass. It performs very well between 5.5 and 7.0.
- Easily propagated by seed and through dividing clumps in early spring. Seeds form in late fall/early winter and can be collected easily.

Growth Habit

- Perennial grower.
- Upright and arching. Individual grass blades are rolled and are like thin straws.
- Plant grows approximately 3 to 4 feet high by 3 to 4 feet wide.

Care and Maintenance

- Fertilize lightly in the spring to promote healthy growth throughout the summer. It is not a heavy feeder and does not require much fertilizer.
- Prune by reducing plant height to approximately 8 to 12 inches tall in late winter. This encourages new growth for a summer flush.



Muhly grass is perennial and will come back year after year throughout Louisiana. LSU AgCenter file photo



Muhly grass is highly sought after for its attractive pink color show in the fall. LSU AgCenter file photo

For more information on muhly grass and other Louisiana Super Plants, contact your local LSU AgCenter Extension office or visit LSUAgCenter.com/SuperPlants.



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