First Knight Fountain Grass

Pennisetum 'First Knight'



First Knight Fountain Grass
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 4 feet

Spread: 3 feet

Sunlight: ○

Hardiness Zone: 7b

Other Names: Purple Fountain Grass, Elephant Grass

Description:

A durable ornamental grass grown for its burgundy-green foliage that intensifies to deep purple-black in summer; center leaves of the clump thrust vertical, outer leaves arch gracefully; will not flower in frost areas; ideal for massing or containers



First Knight Fountain Grass foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Ornamental Features

First Knight Fountain Grass is primarily valued in the landscape or garden for its cascading habit of growth. It attractive grassy leaves emerge grayish green in spring, turning burgundy in color with pointy deep purple spines and tinges of black. As an added bonus, the foliage turns a gorgeous deep purple in the fall.

Landscape Attributes

First Knight Fountain Grass is an herbaceous perennial grass with a shapely form and gracefully arching stems. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other garden plants with less refined foliage.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and is best cleaned up in early spring before it resumes active growth for the season. Deer don't particularly care for this plant and will usually leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. It has no significant negative characteristics.

First Knight Fountain Grass is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Mass Planting
- Rock/Alpine Gardens
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

First Knight Fountain Grass will grow to be about 4 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 3 feet. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 10 years. As an herbaceous perennial, this plant will usually die back to the crown each winter, and will regrow from the base each spring. Be careful not to disturb the crown in late winter when it may not be readily seen!

This plant should only be grown in full sunlight. It is very adaptable to both dry and moist growing conditions, but will not tolerate any standing water. It is considered to be drought-tolerant, and thus makes an ideal choice for a low-water garden or xeriscape application. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This particular variety is an interspecific hybrid. It can be propagated by division; however, as a cultivated variety, be aware that it may be subject to certain restrictions or prohibitions on propagation.

First Knight Fountain Grass is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. Because of its height, it is often used as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants and those that spill over the edges. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.