

Pennisetum alopecuroides 'Hameln' Dwarf Fountain Grass, Australian Fountain Grass¹

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Introduction

'Hameln' is a dwarf cultivar of fountain grass reportedly unsuited for the deep South that often reaches 2 to 3 feet tall. The white inflorescence resembles a bottle brush and persists into fall. These attractive, 5- to 7-inch-long flowers persist on the plant from summer to fall but shatter in the early winter. The foliage of fountain grass is bright green during the summer but turns to a golden brown color in the fall after the flowers begin to die. The foliage arches near the tip and gives the plant a graceful fountain shape. Fountain grass is an outstanding, elegant, fine-textured ornamental grass. Unlike the species, this cultivar does not re-seed itself.

General Information

Scientific name: *Pennisetum alopecuroides* 'Hameln'

Pronunciation: pen-niss-SEE-tum

al-loe-peck-yer-ROY-deez

Common name(s): dwarf fountain grass, 'Hameln' fountain grass

Family: *Gramineae*

Plant type: ornamental grass; herbaceous

USDA hardiness zones: 5 through 8 (Fig. 1)

Planting month for zone 7: year round

Planting month for zone 8: year round

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: mass planting; container or above-ground planter; accent; border; cut flowers

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant



Figure 1. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Description

Height: 2 to 3 feet

Spread: 2 to 3 feet

Plant habit: upright

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: fast

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: most emerge from the soil, usually without a stem

Leaf type: simple

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Leaf margin: entire
Leaf shape: linear
Leaf venation: parallel
Leaf type and persistence: deciduous
Leaf blade length: 18 to 36 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: brown or tan
Fall characteristic: showy

Flower

Flower color: white
Flower characteristic: summer flowering; fall flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: unknown
Fruit length: unknown
Fruit cover: unknown
Fruit color: unknown
Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: typically multi-trunked or clumping stems
Current year stem/twig color: not applicable
Current year stem/twig thickness: not applicable

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in full sun
Soil tolerances: acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam; clay
Drought tolerance: high
Soil salt tolerances: unknown
Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable
Winter interest: plant has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers
Outstanding plant: plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more
Invasive potential: not known to be invasive
Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

This graceful plant has a beautiful effect when its image is reflected in water. It is usually massed together in a landscape bed or planted alone or in a small grouping in a perennial border to provide fine texture. It is suited for the

residential landscape more than most other ornamental grasses because of its small size. It can “make” a landscape with its extremely fine texture that provides a cooling effect as it blows in even the slightest breeze. Fountain grass makes an effective, tall ground cover plant or single specimen plant.

Fountain grass needs to be planted in a site that receives full sun and has well-drained soils. Be prepared to provide some irrigation during dry weather in the summer. The center of the plant becomes open as the plant ages with most of the stems originating along the margin of an open ring. Divide the open clump and re-plant to rejuvenate it.

The propagation of this grass is by division every 5 to 10 years.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.