

Liriope spicata Creeping Lilyturf, Border-grass, Creeping Liriope, Liriope, Monkey-grass¹

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Introduction

Thin green leaves and attractive, violet-blue flowers give this plant its charm, although flowers are not as showy as those of *Liriope muscari*. It forms a dense, uniform cover, unlike *Liriope muscari*, which forms clumps until well established several years after planting. Creeping lilyturf is a 6 to 10 inch tall evergreen perennial that is useful in the landscape as a ground cover. This plant spreads quickly by rhizomes and can invade adjacent turf areas or other ground cover beds. Therefore, this liriope may be best suited for planting in a bed surrounded by hardscape or confined with an edging (root barrier) that is 18 inches deep. The small, purple flowers occur in terminal racemes that nest in with the foliage. These flowers appear in the summer and are followed by blue-black berrylike fruits. Fruits are not produced in abundance.



Figure 1. Full Form - *Liriope spicata*: Creeping Lilyturf, Border-grass, Creeping Liriope, Liriope, Monkey-grass
Credits: Edward F. Gilman, UF/IFAS



Figure 2. Leaf - *Liriope spicata*: Creeping Lilyturf, Border-grass, Creeping Liriope, Liriope, Monkey-grass
Credits: Edward F. Gilman, UF/IFAS

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General Information

Scientific name: *Liriope spicata*

Pronunciation: luh-RYE-oh-pee spy-KAY-tuh

Common name(s): creeping lilyturf, Border-grass, creeping liriope, liriope, monkey-grass

Family: *Liliaceae*

Plant type: perennial; herbaceous; ornamental grass

USDA hardiness zones: 6 through 10 (Figure 3)

Planting month for zone 7: year-round

Planting month for zone 8: year-round

Planting month for zone 9: year-round

Planting month for zone 10: year-round

Origin: native to temperate and tropical Asia

Invasive potential: invasive and not recommended by UF/IFAS faculty (reassess in 10 years)

Uses: mass planting; edging; naturalizing

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range



Figure 3. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Description

Height: 0.5 to 1 feet

Spread: 1 to 2 feet

Plant habit: upright

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: fine

Foliage

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

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: linear

Leaf venation: parallel

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: 12 to 18 inches

Leaf color: variegated

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: violet-blue

Flower characteristic: summer flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: less than 0.5 inch

Fruit cover: fleshy

Fruit color: black

Fruit characteristic: showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not applicable

Current year stem/twig color: not applicable

Current year stem/twig thickness: not applicable

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun;
plant grows in the shade

Soil tolerances: alkaline; clay; sand; acidic; loam

Drought tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerances: unknown

Plant spacing: 6 to 12 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding

Pest resistance: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

Use and Management

Creeping lilyturf is not a good plant for bordering a sidewalk or for use as an edging because it spreads too quickly. Use *Liriope muscari* instead. But it will grow well underneath trees or around shrubs. However, like other liriope, it will not tolerate regular foot traffic.

Liriope can grow in a sunny location but prefers one that has partial shade or full shade. It prefers well-drained soils and is moderately tolerant of drought and salt spray. Wet soil produces many suckers. This plant does have a negative reaction to high temperatures and can turn yellow and melt out in warm weather in the full sun. Liriope beds can be mowed each spring before the new growth begins to eliminate last year's unsightly foliage. This produces a clean-looking bed and improves appearance. If you wait to cut after new growth begins, you will cut off the tops of the new leaves.

Lilyturf is most often propagated by division of the clumps or tubers. It will also grow from seed if the pulp is removed.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern. Grasshoppers may occasionally damage the foliage.