Cape Breeze Switch Grass

Panicum virgatum 'Cape Breeze'



Cape Breeze Switch Grass flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



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Height: 30 inches

Spread: 30 inches

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 4a

Description:

This sturdy, compact selection forms an upright clump of blue-green leaves; airy, pink plumes appear in late summer; foliage turns a beautiful gold in late fall; perfect as a landscape accent, or along borders; great for erosion control

Ornamental Features

Cape Breeze Switch Grass features airy plumes of pink flowers rising above the foliage from late summer to mid fall. Its attractive grassy leaves are bluish-green in color with hints of powder blue. As an added bonus, the foliage turns gorgeous shades of rose and gold in the fall. The tan seed heads are carried on showy plumes displayed in abundance from early to late fall. The tan stems can be quite attractive.

Landscape Attributes

Cape Breeze Switch Grass is an herbaceous perennial grass with an upright spreading habit of growth. 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 cut back to the ground in late winter before active growth resumes. It is a good choice for attracting birds to your yard, but is not particularly attractive to deer who tend to leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Cape Breeze Switch Grass is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Groundcover
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Cape Breeze Switch Grass will grow to be about 24 inches tall at maturity, with a spread of 30 inches. Its foliage tends to remain dense right to the ground, not requiring facer plants in front. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 15 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 does best in full sun to partial shade. It is very adaptable to both dry and moist locations, and should do just fine under typical garden conditions. It is considered to be drought-tolerant, and thus makes an ideal choice for a low-water garden or xeriscape application. This plant should not require much in the way of fertilizing once established, although it may appreciate a shot of general-purpose fertilizer from time to time early in the growing season. It is not particular as to soil type, but has a definite preference for alkaline soils, and is able to handle environmental salt. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This is a selection of a native North American species. 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.

Cape Breeze Switch Grass is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. With its upright habit of growth, it is best suited for use 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.