

MONDO GRASS

Ophiopogon japonicus



Characteristics

- Zone: 7 to 10
- Height: 8 to 12 Inches
- Spread: 8 to 12 Inches
- Bloom Time: June to July
- Bloom Description: Lavender
- Sun: Part shade to full shade
- Water: Medium
- Maintenance: Medium
- Flower: White, Insignificant
- Tolerate: Drought, Heavy Shade, Black Walnut

Culture

Despite its name, this is more of a Lily-like plant than a true grass. It is the traditional groundcover of the Japanese garden, planted at the base of pagoda lights and stone basins. A fine groundcover that stays small, it's perfect for entry gardens, courtyards and atriums. Very good as an edge plant for water gardens or arranged at the base of fountains. Plant in small clusters or as a large, irregular shaped mass in Asian gardens. Great for geometric layouts in postmodern and tropical schemes. Attractive clumps of stemless, dark green, grass-like leaves make a beautiful small-scale groundcover or low border. Tiny spikes of lilac flowers appear in summer. This care-free, easy to grow perennial is ideal for adding texture to the garden.

Noteworthy Characteristics

Ophiopogon japonicus, commonly called mondo grass, is an evergreen, tuberous-rooted, rhizomatous, perennial of the lily family. It typically forms an arching clump to 8-12" tall and as wide of narrow, linear, grass-like, dark green leaves (each leaf to 8-15" long and 3/16" wide). It is native to woodland areas in Japan and Korea. Foliage is similar to that of *Liriope* (also in the lily family), but leaves are narrower and more refined. Small, 6-lobed, bell-shaped, white to lilac-tinted flowers (1/4" wide) bloom in summer in short racemes (2-3" long) atop leafless stalks. Flowers are followed by spherical, pea-sized, blue-black berries (1/4" across). Flowers and fruits are usually partially hidden by the foliage. This plant is ornamentally grown for its tufts of grass-like leaves.

Problems

No serious insect or disease problems.

Garden Uses

Low-maintenance, ornamental grass-like ground cover for shady areas of the landscape. Border foregrounds. Rock gardens. Path edger. Along ponds or streams.