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Pennisetum advena 'Rubrum'

An Ornamental Grass with Striking Appeal

Introduction

Pennisetum advena 'Rubrum', commonly known as Purple Fountain Grass, is a popular ornamental grass admired for its striking appearance and versatile uses in landscape design. Native to Africa, this grass has become a favored choice among gardeners and landscapers worldwide due to its vibrant foliage and feathery plumes.

Botanical Characteristics

Appearance

Pennisetum advena 'Rubrum' is celebrated for its deep burgundy to purple foliage, which retains its color throughout the growing season. The grass forms graceful, arching clumps that can reach heights of 3 to 5 feet, with a similar spread. The foliage is complemented by soft, bottlebrush-like inflorescences that emerge in midsummer, adding a dynamic and airy texture to garden compositions.

Growth and Development

This perennial grass thrives in full sun to partial shade and prefers well-drained soil. It is moderately drought-tolerant once established, making it an excellent choice for low-maintenance gardens. Though typically grown as an annual in colder climates, *Pennisetum advena* 'Rubrum' can be overwintered indoors or in greenhouses in regions where temperatures drop below freezing.

Uses in Landscape Design

Garden Plantings

Purple Fountain Grass is a versatile addition to garden beds and borders. Its bold color and texture create a stunning contrast when paired with other perennials, annuals, and shrubs. It can be used as a focal point in mixed plantings or as an accent plant to provide height and movement.

Container Gardens

Due to its striking appearance and manageable size, *Pennisetum advena* 'Rubrum' is also ideal for container gardens. Planted in large pots or mixed containers, it adds an elegant touch to patios, decks, and entryways. Its cascading form and vibrant plumes can enhance the aesthetic appeal of outdoor living spaces. Cut Flowers and Floral Arrangements