Switch Grass, Heavy Metal Blue

Panicum virgatum 'Heavy Metal'

Height: 5 feet

Spread: 3 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 3a

Ornamental Features

Switch Grass, Heavy Metal Blue features airy plumes of rose flowers rising above the foliage in mid summer. Its attractive grassy leaves are steel blue in color. As an added bonus, the foliage turns a gorgeous orange in the fall. The brick red seed heads are carried on showy plumes displayed in abundance from late summer to mid fall. The steel blue stems are very colorful and add to the overall interest of the plant.

Landscape Attributes

Switch Grass, Heavy Metal Blue is an herbaceous perennial grass with an indistinguished 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 has no significant negative characteristics.

Switch Grass, Heavy Metal Blue is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Vertical Accent
- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use



Switch Grass, Heavy Metal Blue
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Switch Grass, Heavy Metal Blue
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

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Planting & Growing

Switch Grass, Heavy Metal Blue will grow to be about 4 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 3 feet. It tends to be leggy, with a typical clearance of 1 foot from the ground, and should be underplanted with lower-growing perennials. 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 prefers to grow in average to moist conditions, and shouldn't be allowed to dry out. To help this plant achive its best flowering performance, periodically apply a flower-boosting fertilizer from early spring through into the active 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 somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. 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.



Switch Grass, Heavy Metal Blue foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder