Switch Grass, Blood Brothers Red

Panicum virgatum 'Blood Brothers'



Switch Grass, Blood Brothers Red foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Plant Height: 3 feet

Flower Height: 4 feet

Spread: 30 inches

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 3a

Description:

Stunning and compact, this variety is the perfect choice for adding a pop color to garden beds, hedges, large containers or around the poolside; blue-green blades of grass are heavily variegated with wine-purple; tan flowerheads in late summer

Ornamental Features

Switch Grass, Blood Brothers Red features airy plumes of tan flowers rising above the foliage in mid summer. Its attractive grassy leaves are bluish-green in color with showy plum purple variegation. As an added bonus, the foliage turns a gorgeous brick red in the fall. The tan seed heads are carried on showy plumes displayed in abundance from late summer to mid fall.

Landscape Attributes

Switch Grass, Blood Brothers Red 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. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Switch Grass, Blood Brothers Red is recommended for the following landscape applications;

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

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Planting & Growing

Switch Grass, Blood Brothers Red will grow to be about 3 feet tall at maturity extending to 4 feet tall with the flowers, with a spread of 30 inches. 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, Blood Brothers Red 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.