Pampas Grass
*Cortaderia selloana*

Introduction
Pampas Grass forms large, impressive clumps, 8 to 10 feet high and wide, with beautiful silver to white feathery plumes arising on female plants in summer and autumn. This vigorous ornamental grass is widely used as a lawn specimen but its quick growth rate and large size make it unsuitable for most home landscapes. However, it is ideal for barrier or windbreak plantings and has a place in larger areas such as along highways or in commercial or industrial landscapes.

General Information
Scientific name: *Cortaderia selloana*
Pronunciation: kor-tuh-DEER-ee-uh sel-loe-AY-nuh
Common name(s): Pampas Grass
Family: Poaceae
Plant type: ornamental grass; perennial; herbaceous
USDA hardiness zones: 5B through 11
Planting month for zone 7: year round
Planting month for zone 8: year round
Planting month for zone 9: year round
Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round
Origin: not native to North America
Uses: border; mass planting; specimen; accent; cut flowers
Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

Description
Height: 8 to 10 feet
Spread: 8 to 10 feet
Plant habit: upright
Plant density: dense
Growth rate: fast
Texture: fine

Foliage
Leaf arrangement: alternate
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: serrate
Leaf shape: linear
Leaf venation: parallel
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaf blade length: more than 36 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy
Flower
Flower color: pink
Flower characteristic: fall flowering; summer flowering

Fruit
Fruit shape: oval
Fruit length: less than .5 inch
Fruit cover: dry or hard
Fruit color: tan
Fruit characteristic: persists on the plant

Trunk and Branches
Trunk/bark/branches: typically multi-trunked or clumping stems
Current year stem/twig color: not applicable
Current year stem/twig thickness: not applicable

Culture
Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun
Soil tolerances: alkaline; clay; sand; acidic; loam
Drought tolerance: high
Soil salt tolerances: moderate
Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other
Roots: sprouts from roots or lower trunk
Winter interest: no special winter interest
Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding
Invasive potential: not known to be invasive
Pest resistance: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

Use and Management
In sun or partial shade, Pampas Grass grows well in most soils except very wet ones, tolerating drought and salt spray, making it especially attractive for seaside landscapes. Be careful in the placement of Pampas Grass in the landscape, however, as it gets larger than most people realize. Many are planted in residential landscapes and later removed because it has grown too large. Children may cut themselves if they accidentally fall into the plant because the edges of the leaves are sharply serrated. Plant six to eight feet apart in a mass planting. Cultivars include: ‘Argenteum’, silvery plumes; ‘Gold Band’, yellow-edged leaves; ‘Pumila’, dwarf, four to six feet high; ‘Rendatleri’, pink plumes; ‘Rosa Feder’, pink plumes; ‘Sunningdale Silver’, silvery white plumes; and ‘White’, white, feathery plumes. Propagation is by division.

Pests and Diseases
No pests or diseases are of major concern.

by Edward F. Gilman