



October 2011



SPRIGS N SPROUTS

[The Gardeners of Lima](#) – link to website for more info



Steve Maki, President

Kay Studer presented “Ornamental Grasses” at the September meeting. Kay’s presentation inspired me to dig up (no pun intended) ornamental grasses information. I heard her say “underground runners and clump formers” and “warm season and cool season” as related to grasses, but I did not really get it until I did some more reading.

The article attached on ornamental grasses contains information from Kay’s presentation and information from websites of state college Extension departments. The last page of the article has hyperlinks to the best (in my humble opinion) websites for information and for pictures.

The last page of the article also has listed three books for references. One of the books, *The Encyclopedia of Ornamental Grasses*, is in the clubhouse library for lending out.

Instead of pictures from the September meeting being printed here, I am going to save some printer ink and hyperlink you to The Gardeners of Lima website to look at the pictures—where they look the best anyways. Please click on below link for:

[September meeting pictures](#)

Dick Hussey had the only tomato to be weighed at the September meeting. Please...if anyone has a tomato bigger than Dick’s tomato that weighed 2 lb. 7.7 oz., please bring it to the October meeting for the Big Tomato Contest. Otherwise, Dick is going to be the winner...again!

Sorry, Steve, I took over your column this month. You get this column next month!

-Teresa Heath
Newsletter & website editor



October Meeting Cook-In & Halloween Party!

Date: Tuesday October 11

Time: **6:30 P.M.**
(EARLY START TIME)

At: Faurot Park clubhouse

Please bring: a Dessert covered dish

Provided will be:
main dishes & side dishes
catered by Ed & Bev Morrison

Please dress for Halloween, if you like. Most of us do dress-up. See the pictures on website: [last year’s meeting](#)

Also,
Voting for new officers.
Weigh-In for Big Tomato Contest



The Gardener’s Calendar 2012 is \$5 from Steve Maki.

THE GARDENERS OF LIMA

- 1) Reservation Payment for Christmas/Awards Banquet
AND
2) Membership Payment for 2012 Club Dues

Member (s) Name _____

Address _____

Home Telephone _____ Other Telephone _____

- 1) Christmas/Awards Banquet on Thursday December 15, 2011
at Casa Lu Al, 2323 North West Street, Lima, Ohio
6:00 pm - social half-hour and 7:00 PM - Dinner served seated

\$10.00 for each person X _____ (number of persons attending)
Banquet Total Enclosed \$ _____

- 2) 2012 Membership
The Gardeners of America/Men's Garden Club of America (TGOA/MGOA)
Single is \$16.00
Family is \$25.00 + add \$1.00 for each family member joining

-OR- (pay below only if you are a national lifetime member)

2012 regional membership
TGOA/MGOA Central Great Lakes Region
per person - \$1.00

Membership Total Enclosed: \$ _____

Banquet and Membership GRAND TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

Check or Cash payment may be made to: Rex Maurer, Treasurer, TGOL
868 Algonkin Trail, Lima OH 45805
(419) 222-4356

Ornamental grasses was the topic of a presentation by Kay Studer at the September meeting of The Gardeners of Lima. Kay is the authority--to The Gardeners of Lima--on everything horticultural. Many ornamental grasses mature later than the 2nd week of September—when the presentation was given. Now, the last week of September is here, and like Kay said—ornamental grasses have matured much more—showing more height and seedpods. [Buckeye Blooms](#) is Kay Studer's organic flower business.

Kay said good reasons to grow ornamental grasses are: 1) low maintenance; 2) good tolerance to northwest Ohio's environment; and, 3) varied sizes, shapes, and colors.

Kay's advice for growing ornamental grasses:

- 1) Do provide lots of sunlight. Grasses want lots of sun.
- 2) Do not water. Grasses do not like wet feet (soggy soil).
- 3) Do not fertilize. Grasses do not do better with fertilizer.
- 4) Do not use insecticide or fungicide. Grasses are insect and fungus resistant.

Presentations are invitations to the audience to get more information and get a better grasp on the subject. Below is information dug up by me (and information from Kay's presentation) to get a better grasp on ornamental grasses.

Cool season grasses do better when temperatures are cool. They may need watered to keep them healthy. Cool season grasses may require division more than once a year. If not divided often enough, they tend to die out in the center. Some cool season grasses are Fescues, Blue Oat Grass, Autumn Moor grass, Tufted hair grass, and Karl Foersters reed grass.

Warm season grasses—what is most often grown in northwest Ohio—do better during warmer times of the year and remain good looking even when temperatures are high and water is limited. Warm season grasses do not begin to show growth until the soil warms and the weather is warm every day. Warm season grasses usually do not require division as frequently as cool season grasses. Some

warm season grasses include Northern Sea Oats, Maiden grasses, Fountain grasses, and Switch grasses

Grasses that spread by **underground runners** spread vigorously (often invasively). Grasses that spread by underground runners make good ground cover plants. Some grasses that have runners are Ribbon grasses and Northern sea oats grass.

Grasses that are **clump formers** increase outward in a circle and need divided every few years. If the middle of the plant becomes sparse; soil can be added in the sparse middle of the clump, and the plant should start to fill in the middle again. Some clump formers are the Maiden grasses, Fescue grasses, Switch grasses, Big (and Little) blue stem.

Some families of ornamental grasses have **both underground runners and clump formers**. The family group of Fountain grasses is an example. Feather reed grass is a Fountain grass that has underground runners. Karl Foesters reed grass is a fountain grass that forms clumps. Both Feather reed grass and Karl Foesters reed grass are in the Fountain grass family.

Grasses also have seeds which will reproduce the plant. A transplant from division is quicker to grow. Planting in the spring will produce the best result since after mid-summer grasses switch from growth to producing flowers and seeds.

Perennials are great planted with the grasses--coneflowers, black-eyed susans, sedums, goldenrod, sunflowers, Joe Pyle weed, etc. Several different heights of grasses are appealing to the eye. Also, several types of perennials that flower at different times—with some interesting rocks added--complete a grouping of grasses.

Dried grasses standing upward in the winter definitely add interest to the landscape. But, eventually the dried foliage needs cut down to the ground in either in the fall or in the early spring. On the following pages are examples of ornamental grasses. There are many more grasses than the examples. More ornamental grasses can be found with the resources listed on the last page.

Very popular - Miscanthus grasses (**Maiden grasses**) –form large clumps; different colors and variegated; 2' – 12' tall varieties. Examples of Maiden grasses:



Porcupine grass is stiff , 6' tall



Silver feather grass, 5' – 8' tall



Maiden Grass – Flame, 3'-5' tall



Zebra grass is flowering, 7' tall



Red silver maiden grass, 5'- 8' tall



Variegated maiden grass, 3'-6'

Phalaris grasses (**ribbon grasses**) will grow where nothing else seems to want to grow. And, they make good ground cover. The variegated forms form attractive clumps. 'Picata' and 'Feeseys Form' are the two ribbon grasses that tend to be less invasive and easier to control, but all are vigorous spreaders.



Examples of Pennisetum grasses (**Fountain grasses**)



Purple fountain grass, Annual in NW Ohio, deer do not like it, clumping, 3' - 5' tall



Feather reed grass, hardy, smaller plant that looks good with at least three plants; runners, 3' - 4' tall



Karl Foerster's reed grass, hardy, beautiful, clumping, 4' - 5' tall

Prairie grasses consist of different families of grasses that all are native to American prairies. Examples of Prairie grasses:



Panicum group (**Switch grass**), Warm season, hardy, clump forming, 3' - 7' tall



Andropogon gerardii (**Big blue stem**) & *Schizachyrium scoparium* (**Little blue stem**) Big & Little are warm season, hardy, and clump forming.



Chasmanthium latifolium (**Northern Sea Oats**) Warm season, clump forming, About 2' tall



Sporobolus heterolepis (**Prairie dropseed**) fragrant flowers, Warm season, hardy, clump forming, 2' tall

Resources on Ornamental Grasses

web resources:

OSU Extension Fact Sheet has a **useful chart**:
<http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/1000/1238.html>

University of Illinois Extension has **extensive pictures**:
[Ornamental Grasses - University of Illinois Extension](#)

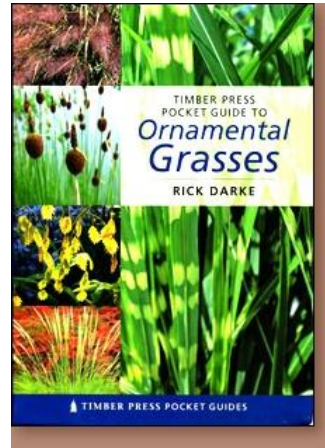
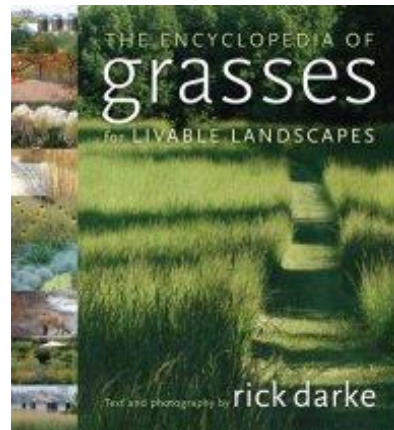
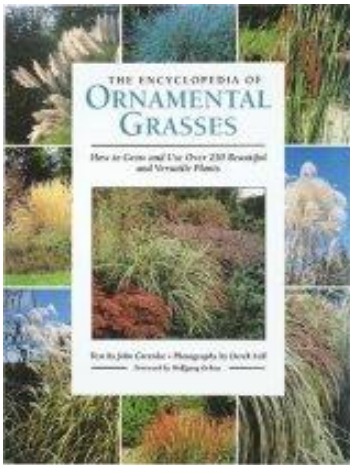
Smithsonian Institute has **condensed information**:
http://www.gardens.si.edu/horticulture/res_ed/fctsht/grasses.htm

YouTube Videos on ornamental grasses:
[YouTube Ornamental Grasses](#)



Prairie with Big blue stem grass in the middle

book resources:



-Teresa Heath, The Gardeners of Lima
September 2011