Prairie Dropseed

Sporobolus heterolepis



Prairie Dropseed
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Plant Height: 24 inches

Flower Height: 3 feet

Spread: 3 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 2a

Description:

Native to the Great Plains and Prairies, this extremely fine-textured grass features airy plumes of fine seed heads floating over the grassy foliage in the late season; ideal for restoration projects and flowing hummocky accents in the urban landscape

Ornamental Features

Prairie Dropseed features delicate plumes of orange flowers rising above the foliage from late summer to early fall. The tan seed heads are carried on showy plumes displayed in abundance from early to late fall. Its threadlike leaves are light green in color. As an added bonus, the foliage turns a gorgeous harvest gold in the fall.



Prairie Dropseed fruit
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Prairie Dropseed is an open herbaceous perennial grass with a shapely form and gracefully arching stems. It brings an extremely fine and delicate texture to the garden composition and should be used to full effect.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and is best cleaned up in early spring before it resumes active growth for the season. Deer don't particularly care for this plant and will usually leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Prairie Dropseed is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Naturalizing And Woodland Gardens

Planting & Growing

Prairie Dropseed will grow to be about 24 inches tall at maturity extending to 3 feet tall with the flowers, with a spread of 3 feet. Its foliage tends to remain dense right to the ground, not requiring facer plants in front. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for approximately 10 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!



Prairie Dropseed
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

This plant does best in full sun to partial shade. It is very adaptable to both dry and moist locations, and should do just fine under typical garden conditions. It is considered to be drought-tolerant, and thus makes an ideal choice for a low-water garden or xeriscape application. It is not particular as to soil type or pH, and is able to handle environmental salt. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is native to parts of North America.