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Schizachyrium scoparium

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Species Native to Missouri

Common Name: little bluestem 

Type: Ornamental grass

Family: Poaceae

Native Range: Eastern North America

Zone: 3 to 9

Height: 2.00 to 4.00 feet

Spread: 1.50 to 2.00 feet

Bloom Time: August to February

Bloom Description: Purplish bronze

Sun: Full sun

Water: Dry to medium

Maintenance: Low

Suggested Use: Rain Garden

Flower: Insignificant

Leaf: Good Fall

Other: Winter Interest

Tolerate: Deer, Drought, Erosion, Dry Soil, Shallow-Rocky Soil, Black Walnut, Air Pollution

[Garden locations](#)

Culture

Easily grown in average, dry to medium moisture, well-drained soil in full sun. Tolerates a wide range of soil conditions. Tolerates clay soils and occasional inundation. Performs well in poor soils. Good drought resistance once established. Tolerates high heat and humidity. Cut to the ground in late winter to early spring.

Noteworthy Characteristics

Schizachyrium scoparium, commonly called little bluestem, is native to prairies, fields, clearings, hills, limestone glades, roadsides, waste areas and open woods from Alberta to Quebec south to Arizona and Florida. It was one of the dominant grasses of the vast tallgrass prairie region which once covered rich and fertile soils in many parts of central North America. It typically matures to 2-4' (less frequently to 5') tall, and features upright clumps of slender, flat, linear green leaves (to 1/4" wide), with each leaf having a tinge of blue at the base. Purplish-bronze flowers appear in 3" long racemes on branched stems rising above the foliage in August. Flowers are followed by clusters of fluffy, silvery-white seed heads which are attractive and often persist into winter. Many consider the most outstanding ornamental feature of this grass to be its bronze-orange fall foliage color.

Genus name comes from the Latin *schizein* meaning to split and *achyron* meaning chaff.

Specific epithet means broomlike.

Common name is in reference to the lavender-blue color on the stem bases.

Problems

No serious insect or disease problems.

Garden Uses

Ornamental grass for borders, cottage gardens, rain gardens, wild gardens, wood margins, meadows or prairie-like settings. Group or mass. A good low-maintenance selection for sun-baked areas.



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