



Carousel Little Bluestem PPAF

Schizachyrium scoparium 'Carousel'

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This compact selection of a native prairie grass thrives on neglect. 'Carousel' has distinctive summer foliage that is blue-green with streaks of pink, transitioning to a kaleidoscope of radiant copper, pink, beige and mahogany hues in fall. 'Carousel' is resistant to winter lodging, extending interest for months and making it an excellent choice for the winter landscape.





Carousel Little Bluestem

Schizachyrium scoparium 'Carousel'

Botanical Name

Schizachyrium scoparium 'Carousel' US PPAF, CA PBRAF

Trade Name

Carousel Little Bluestem

Family

Poaceae (Grass Family)

Origin

Schizachyrium scoparium is an important warm-season, clump-forming native prairie grass that is widely distributed throughout the prairies and open woods of North America from Quebec to Alberta, and south to Arizona and Florida. 'Carousel' is an advanced selection developed by Don Boehm, owner of Boehm's Garden Center in Rushville, Illinois.

Hardiness

USDA Zones 3-9

Bloom Season

This selection starts blooming in northern Illinois (USDA Zone 5) in mid-August with small inconspicuous flowers. The flowering stems will persist all winter, adding seasonal interest.

General Description and Habit

'Carousel' was selected for its dwarf unique rounded, bowl-shaped habit, and superior resistance to lodging in winter. Its fine green to blue-green foliage and upright flowering stems exhibit unique pink tones in midsummer, transitioning to a medley of fall colors in autumn. The stems assume a beige color but remain of interest all winter long.

Size and Growth Rate

Mature plants are broad-rounded and measure about 2 ½ feet tall by 2 ½ feet wide in five years. Clump forming, will not spread.

Ornamental Characteristics

'Carousel' has distinctive upright flowering stems that are the real ornamental value to this plant. The fine-textured summer foliage passes through an array of color changes, from blue-green with streaks of pink in midsummer to a radiant kaleidoscope of copper, pink, beige, and mahogany hues in fall. The ornamental, fluffy silver seed heads add to the show that persists for months, making this grass an excellent choice for fall color and the winter landscape.

Culture

This extremely low-maintenance grass requires only to be cut back every spring. 'Carousel' is adaptable but prefers well-drained medium to dry soils. Sandy soils are optimal, but the plant will tolerate clay soils as long as they are not too wet. Once established, it is very drought tolerant. Prefers full sun. Avoid planting in shade or areas with high-nutrient wet soils, as this will tend to make the plant have weak stems that fall over.

Pest and Disease Problems

None known.

Landscape Value

This is an excellent native grass for the garden that is truly exceptional in massed plantings. Use freely in sunny borders, native plant gardens, naturalized areas, prairies, and meadows. It has great winter interest, and resists winter lodging. 'Carousel' is highly deer resistant and provides food and cover for wildlife all winter.

Propagation

Propagate by division in late spring. Plants propagated from seed will not be true to type.

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