

Muhlenbergia capillaris (Pink Muhly Grass)

Pink Muhly Grass is an absolute showstopper for late-season color, and it's a plant that sounds too good to be true. Long-lived in USDA zones 7 – 10, with little to no insect or disease pests, and highly resistant to deer grazing, this ornamental grass is perfect for the low-maintenance garden.

Delicate flower plumes up to 12-in. long create a striking



ABOVE: *Muhlenbergia capillaris* foliage Heather Paul [CC BY-ND 2.0](#)

BELOW: Form - Winter - Wake Co., NC Cathy DeWitt [CC BY 4.0](#)

RIGHT: Form (Durham County)-Mid Summer Andrea Laine [CC BY-NC](#)



pinkish-purple haze above the foliage from September through November. As a native ornamental grass, it is a great complement to landscape beds with fading summer annuals. Tan seed plumes add winter interest and are a food source for birds.

Green, needle-like foliage of Muhly Grass emerges in spring and grows to mature size (up to 4-ft. tall and 3-ft.

wide) by summer, providing excellent textural variation for perennial borders, flower beds and rain gardens. This perennial is attractive individually, but it makes a big show when used in a mass planting.

Give it plenty of sunshine. Muhly Grass tolerates heat,



and humidity as well as salt spray and poor soils typical of coastal settings. Although some *Muhlenbergia* species and cultivars are more tolerant of wet conditions than others, it prefers good drainage.

Muhly Grass is drought-tolerant once established, but it requires supplemental irrigation at planting. It will look better and flower more profusely

with periodic supplemental irrigation during drought.

Before new growth begins in early spring, cut foliage back to the ground. Periodically divide it in spring or early summer to renew vigor.

Common names

Gulf Muhly, Hairgrass, Muhly Grass, Mule Grass, Pink Hair Grass, Pink Muhly, Purple Muhly, Mist Grass. *Muhlenbergia*, also called Sweetgrass, is used in the low-country of South Carolina for traditional basket weaving.

Cultivars / Varieties

'Lenca,' 'Pink Flamingo,' 'Regal Mist,' 'White Cloud' (not as eye-catching as Pink Muhly Grass and blooms shortly after the native Pink Muhly)

Muhly Grass provides excellent wildlife cover year-round. Songbirds and small mammals eat the seeds. Muhly Grass also attracts beneficial insects such as lady beetles (*Coccinella spp.*).

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For more information on gardening in Brunswick County, please call the Brunswick County Cooperative Extension Office, 910.253.2610.

SOURCES:

[Muhlenbergia capillaris \(Gulf Muhly, Hairgrass, Muhly Grass, Mule Grass, Pink Hair Grass, Pink Muhly, Pink Muhly Grass, Purple Muhly\) | North Carolina Extension Gardener Plant Toolbox \(ncsu.edu\)](#)

[Rain Garden Plants: Muhlenbergia capillaris – Muhly Grass | Home & Garden Information Center \(clemson.edu\)](#)