EVERETT'S GARDENS
Where Plant Lovers Go!

Karl's Cousin® Bluestem

Andropogon gerardii 'Nondwhr'



Karl's Cousin Bluestem in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 5 feet

Spread: 24 inches

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 4

Description:

A lovely fine textured, narrow upright spreading selection; beautiful when used as accent features in landscapes and garden beds; blue-green grassy foliage show off before changing to purple-blue in the fall; low maintenance and easy to grow

Ornamental Features

Karl's Cousin Bluestem is primarily grown for its highly ornamental fruit. The coppery-bronze seed heads are carried on showy plumes displayed in abundance from late summer to early fall. Its attractive grassy leaves emerge grayish green in spring, turning green in color. As an added bonus, the foliage turns gorgeous shades of silvery blue and lavender in the fall. The steel blue stems can be quite attractive.

Landscape Attributes

Karl's Cousin Bluestem is an herbaceous perennial grass with an upright spreading habit of growth. 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 cut back to the ground in late winter before active growth resumes. It is a good choice for attracting birds to your yard. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Karl's Cousin Bluestem is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Vertical Accent
- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

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Planting & Growing

Karl's Cousin Bluestem will grow to be about 4 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 24 inches. It tends to be leggy, with a typical clearance of 1 foot from the ground, and should be underplanted with lower-growing perennials. 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!

This plant does best in full sun to partial shade. It is an amazingly adaptable plant, tolerating both dry conditions and even some standing water. It is considered to be drought-tolerant, and thus makes an ideal choice for a low-water garden or xeriscape application. This plant does not require much in the way of fertilizing once established. It is not particular as to soil type or pH, and is able to handle environmental salt. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This is a selection of a native North American species. It can be propagated by division; however, as a cultivated variety, be aware that it may be subject to certain restrictions or prohibitions on propagation.

Karl's Cousin Bluestem is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. With its upright habit of growth, it is best suited for use as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants and those that spill over the edges. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.