

PRUNING ORNAMENTAL GRASSES

Deciduous Ornamental Grasses

Examples: Miscanthus, Penstemon, Panicum, Hakonechloa

When pruning dormant grasses, cut the dry foliage close to the ground, but be careful not to damage the crown - the point where the plant stem meets the roots. For Fountain Grass, leave about 3-4 inches of stem. For Maiden and Switchgrass, leave about 6 inches. If you're unsure about the crown's location, it's safer to leave a bit more stem than necessary.

Evergreen Ornamental Grasses

Examples: Liriope, Carex, Festuca

These compact grasses maintain their green color year-round. However, by the end of the growing season, they may develop brown foliage, creating a somewhat untidy appearance. To tidy up your evergreen ornamental grasses, simply put on gardening gloves and gently run your fingers through the foliage to remove dead and unsightly growth.

For more substantial rejuvenation, you can trim these grasses back with pruners. Perform this task in early spring, removing only two-thirds of the foliage. Within a few months, your ornamental grasses will showcase fresh, vibrant growth.

Keep in mind that this rejuvenation pruning depletes energy stored in the leaves. Therefore, perform aggressive pruning sparingly, ideally every 2 to 3 years as needed.

Yucca: A Grass-Like Alternative

Although not a true grass, Yucca's low-maintenance nature and minimal water requirements make it an increasingly popular choice in the St. Louis climate. Here's how to care for your Yucca:

- Regular Maintenance:
 - Clean by pruning old or damaged leaves back to the crown
 - This simple process keeps the plant tidy and healthy
- Rejuvenation Pruning:
 - For old or neglected plants, prune back to about 1 foot in mid-spring
 - Allow approximately 4 months for regrowth after aggressive pruning

Remember, patience is key when rejuvenating your Yucca. The plant will take time to recover, but the result will be a refreshed and vibrant specimen.