

Propagation of Ornamental Grasses in Liners®

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We are propagators of cell pack liners that we ship to other growers. Therefore, I will be speaking about propagation of small liner-sized material. We produce grass liners three different ways; division, seed, and cuttings (Table 1.).

DIVISION

Almost all grasses can be propagated by division. In fact, I can't think of any grasses that cannot be propagated by division at one time or another. Most grasses can be divided down to single divisions. The limitations of division in almost all cases is the time of year. Warm season grasses such as *Miscanthus* should be divided dormant, from December to February, then put in a warm house at 55°F. They will root-up and flush out in approximately 10 to 12 weeks depending on the cultivar. You can divide warm season grasses while growing in the spring but new shoots can be damaged.

Cool season grasses, i.e., grasses that grow vigorously in the spring and fall, are easily divided while growing. They languish in the heat, and tend to melt when divided during the hot months. Examples of these are *Fescue*, *Helictotrichon*, and *Koeleria glauca*. A good rule of thumb is not to divide grasses when they are blooming.

SEED

All of the grasses that we do from seed are straight species. We use two methods of sowing seeds. We try to sow as much seed as possible with our mechanical seeder. However, some of the seed is too odd shaped or too hairy to sow with a machine. We sow the odd seed, by hand, in row trays or community flats.

CUTTINGS

Lastly, we have had good success growing a few grasses from cuttings. *Pennisetum setaceum* 'Rubrum' is our largest selling plant, and we do most of it by cuttings. We take a young shoot that has been cut close to the crown so that the bottom of the shoot has a curve. We then dip the cutting in Hormodin #1 or 1% IBA in powder form so the base of the cuttings are coated. We then stick the cuttings in a 50-cell pack and place under mist. The mist is weaned off in 7 to 10 days depending on the time of year. The cutting root up and are ready for shipping in 8 to 10 weeks.

Table 1. Propagation methods for ornamental grasses.

	Division	Seed	Cuttings
<i>Andropogon</i>		×	
<i>Briza media</i>	×	×	
<i>Calamagrostis brachytricha</i>	×	×	
<i>Calamagrostis xacutiflora</i> 'Karl Foerster'	×		
<i>Calamagrostis xacutiflora</i> 'Overdam'	×		
<i>Carex acuta</i>		×	
<i>Carex buchananii</i>		×	
<i>Carex comans</i> bronze		×	
<i>Carex flacca</i>		×	
<i>Carex muskingumensis</i>		×	
<i>Carex</i> selections	×		
<i>Carex sylvatica</i>		×	
<i>Carex tenuiculmis</i>		×	
<i>Chasmanthium latifolium</i>		×	
<i>Cortaderia</i>		×	
<i>Cymbopogon citratus</i>	×		
<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i>		×	
<i>Festuca glauca</i>		×	
<i>Festuca glauca</i> 'Elijah Blue'	×		
<i>Festuca ovina</i>		×	
<i>Glyceria maxima</i>		×	
<i>Hakonechloa macra</i> 'Aureola'	×		
<i>Helictotrichon sempervirens</i>	×		
<i>Hystrix patula</i>		×	
<i>Imperta cylindrica</i> 'Rubra' (syn. 'Red Baron')	×		
<i>Koeleria glauca</i>		×	
<i>Leymus arenarius</i> 'Blue Dune'	×		
<i>Luzula nivea</i>		×	
<i>Luzula sylvatica</i>		×	
<i>Melica transsilvanica</i>		×	
<i>Miscanthus</i> selections	×		
<i>Molinia caerulea</i> subsp. <i>arundinacea</i> 'Skyracer'	×		
<i>Panicum</i> selections	×		
<i>Panicum virgatum</i>		×	
<i>Pennisetum alopecuroides</i> f. <i>viridescens</i>		×	
<i>Pennisetum alopecuroides</i> 'Burgandy Giant'			×
<i>Pennisetum alopecuroides</i> 'Moudry'		×	
<i>Pennisetum orientale</i>		×	
<i>Pennisetum</i> selections	×		
<i>Pennisetum setaceum</i> 'Cupreum Compactum'			×
<i>Pennisetum setaceum</i> 'Rubrum'			×
<i>Phalaris arundinacea</i> var. <i>picta</i> 'Feeseys'			×
<i>Saccharum ravennae</i> (syn. <i>Erianthus ravennae</i>)		×	
<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>		×	
<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i> 'The Blues'	×		
<i>Sorghastrum nutans</i>		×	
<i>Spodiopogon sibiricus</i>		×	
<i>Sporobolus heterolepis</i>		×	
<i>Stipa</i>		×	