

## Pennisetum alopecuroides var. viridescens Black Fountain Grass

*Pennisetum alopecuroides* var. *viridescens* (Black Fountain Grass) is a warm season clump-forming, ornamental grass that provides 4-season interest. Each plant grows in a compact clump, reaching 2-3 feet tall and equally wide. Narrow, medium to deep green leaves shine in the summer, arching gracefully back to allow the tall stems of the brushy purple flower heads to push upwards. Flowers appear as showy, smoky, purple-black fox tails in August and the arching form looks like water spraying from a fountain, catching the wind and adding movement to a garden display. Leaves and seed heads change to golden yellow in fall and fade to beige in late fall. Foliage remains attractive throughout the winter. This plant may seed and spread aggressively; deadhead to prevent. Cut dried grass back to roughly 6" tall in late winter or early spring. Prefers full sun and well-drained moist to wet soils, although it tolerates drought. Also tolerant of wet soils, black walnut, air pollution, salt and heat, making it a good choice for irrigated urban garden beds.

**Botanical Name:** *Pennisetum alopecuroides* var. *viridescens*

**Common Name:** Black Fountain Grass

**Family:** Poaceae

**Nativity:** Not Native to US

**USDA Zone:** 5 to 9

**Light Type:** Full sun to Part Shade

**Soil Type:** Clay, Loam, Sand

**Soil Preferences:** well-drained soil

**Soil Moisture:** Medium to Wet

**Typical height (ft):** 2-3'

**Typical width (ft):** 2-3'

**Foliage:** Medium green

**Bloom Time:** August, September, October

**Bloom:** Black to dark purple or maroon

**Ecological features:** Roots provide erosion control

**Tolerance of:** Drought, wet soil, black walnut, air pollution, salt, heat

**Additional notes:** Self-seeding can be a problem, deadhead to prevent; cut grass back to 6" tall in late winter or early spring

**Companion plants:** Asters, Coneflowers (*Echinacea* spp.), Catmint (*Nepeta* spp.), Dense Blazing Star (*Liatris spicata* spp.), and Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia fulgida*)

**For more information see:**

<http://www.newmoonnursery.com/plant/Pennisetum-alopecuroides>

<https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/ornamental/foliage/fountain-grass/fountain-grass-pruning.htm>

<https://www.seedaholic.com/pennisetum-alopecuroides-var-viridescens.html>

**Images of *Pennisetum alopecuroides* var. *viridescens***



*Pennisetum alopecuroides* Viridescens Ozz.jpg  
plant form



Pennisetum alopecuroides Viridescens 1zz.jpg  
seedhead



Pennisetum alopecuroides Viridescens\_1.jpg  
mounded form



Pennisetum alopecuroides Viridescens\_2.jpg  
combine with other plants

**Image choices for narrative:**

Pennisetum alopecuroides Viridescens\_1.jpg - mounded form

Pennisetum alopecuroides Viridescens 1zz.jpg - seedhead