



ORNAMENTAL GRASSES INTERMOUNTAIN REGION

Overdam Feather Reed Grass

Calamagrostis acutiflora 'Overdam'

BY **CHERI STRINGER**, APLD

As the fall season progresses, I am captivated by the beauty of ornamental grasses in the landscape. A planting plan with multi-season interest in the intermountain region isn't complete without including several varieties. One of my favorites to use in a variety of garden styles is the flexible and high-performing Overdam feather reed grass (*Calamagrostis acutiflora* 'Overdam').

This variegated feather reed grass performs in the field similarly to its cousin *Calamagrostis acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster,' but with a softer presentation. The thinly striped, green and white leaves are stunning in part shade, adding sophistication to classic cottage garden charmers like peonies and hydrangeas. A flexible performer, it works equally well in modern landscapes where narrow beds and tidy plants are a requirement. As the summer season progresses and other plants are starting to tilt and wane, this grass remains upright, with filled-out plumes of seed heads that contrast nicely with plants around it.



Plant this grass in front of 'Royal Purple' smoke tree (*Cotinus coggygria*) or 'Coppertina' ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolius*) for a stunning combination that will be sure to encourage admiring photo-takers. In the winter, I encourage my clients to leave feather reed grass uncut, as the seed heads pierce the snow, providing sculptural structure and texture. In spring, the plumes provide birds important sources of food and nest building material. Trim them back in April just before the new stalks begin to emerge.

USDA HARDINESS

ZONES: 4-9

SIZE: 1-3' H x 1-3' W

CULTURAL REQUIREMENTS:

Full sun to part shade. Performs best in low water and average, well-drained soil.

Cheri Stringer, APLD, is the owner/principal behind **TLC Gardens**, a design-build landscape firm in Colorado. Their goal is to reconnect clients with nature by integrating elegant outdoor spaces or by upscaling commercial properties with areas for people to reflect and engage with the natural world. Their team of artisans, builders, and designers create unique solutions for residential and commercial sites.



PHOTOGRAPHS AND DESIGN BY **CHERI STRINGER**, APLD