

Some Hardy Ornamental Grasses Worth Growing

Roderick Cameron, Superintendent of Parks, Toronto

“ORNAMENTAL grasses” is a subject not much thought of or understood in this country, not half as much as it should be. For my own fancy, I would sooner plant them on my lawn than geraniums. The time is at hand when they will be more in demand for decorating our lawns than in the past. A bed of grasses and their allies to my mind are more beautiful and interesting than a bed of geranium or tulips, and in saying this, I have in my mind's eye the bed of them that was at the Pan-American Exhibition in 1901. It was a broken, irregular shaped bed and looked fully better than any other bed there. The varieties it contained as far as I can remember were as follows:

Eulalia Japonica (*Miscanthus Sinensis*) five feet, six inches high, green; in flower September 27.

E. Japonica variegatus, four feet high, variegated; in flower September 25.

E. Japonica gracillimus, three and a half feet high, narrow, mid-rib white; in flower September 20.

E. Japonica Zebrinus, bars of yellow across the leaves, zebra-like, and grows to from four to five feet high, a grand species; in flower September 20.

These composed the centre of the bed, and here and there were several varieties of bamboo, *Bambusa Metake*, and several others that I cannot now remember. Plume grass (*Erianthus Ravennæ*) and ribbon grass (*Phalaris arundinacea variegata*) filled up towards the edge of the bed and to break the level sky line there was a plant here and there of the giant reed of Southern Europe, *Arundo Donax*. The edge or border of the bed was planted with fountain grass (*Pennisetum longistylum*).

All of these, or any one of them would

be hardy at Niagara Falls, but the *Pennisetum*. I find that if these plants are taken up and potted in the fall, or placed in boxes and put into a cool greenhouse until coming spring, they may then be divided, potted into small pots and placed in the heat, when they will make good plants for the following season.

They can also be grown from seeds very readily. By sowing the seeds in February, they will be ready to plant out in May. There are two more varieties of this *Pennisetum* that should be grown along with the above, *P. Ruppellii* and *P. macrophyllum sanguinimum*. All three may be treated the same way.

There could be many others added to the above, such as *Poa trivialis variegata*, a very dwarf plant, and beautifully variegated, four inches, grand for edging a bed, very hardy, in flower September 1.

Blue fescue (*Festuca glauca*), would make a grand second line along the edge, six inches high and hardy, from Britain, in flower June 13; using *Molinia cærulea* from Central Europe, one foot high, as a third.

The variegated oat grass of garden origin, *Arrhenatherum bulbosum variegatum*, grows fifteen to thirty inches high. This would make a very bright fourth line, in bloom September 1. The *Elymus glaucus* from Turkestan, growing to three to four feet and giant rye grass (*Elymus condensatus*) could be made use of among those already mentioned.

I must not forget to mention *Arundo Donax glauca* four to five feet high, and *Arundo Donax variegata*, four to six feet high, and one of the most beautiful variegated grasses or reeds I know of. The type *Arundo Donax* grows fourteen feet high. These three reeds are hardy at Niagara Falls, but they would have to be protected farther north, or grown in tubs and kept in cold storage during winter. I found also that *Bambusa aurea* was hardy at the Falls; farther north it would have to be tubbed.

There are many other varieties of grasses that could be used to good advantage in many ways as follows: *Melica* grass (*Melica altissima atropurpurea*)

and *Melica ciliata*, beautiful and graceful. *Gymnothrix latifolia*, *Gymnothrix Japonicum* and beard grass, (*Andropogon Sorghum*), seven feet high, of North America, should be in this collection. Pampas grass (*Gynerium Cortaderia argentea*) also should find a place in the col-

lection but must be grown in tubs and wintered in cold storage.

I hope this list will be the means of introducing some of these beautiful



Arundo Donax Variegata

grasses, if not all of them, to be grown upon lawns. They are well worth a trial.

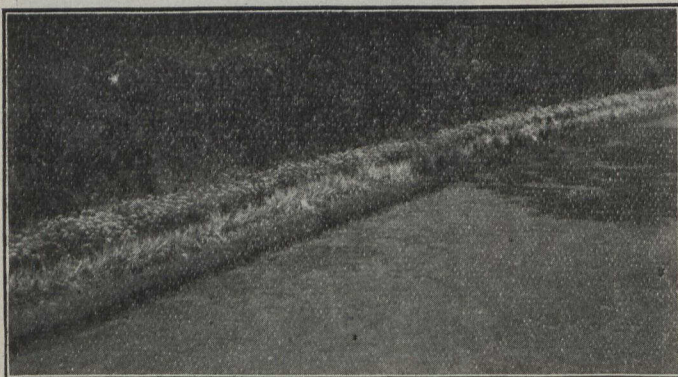
The Forget-me-not

This flower succeeds best in cold, damp ground, and in partial shade, but care must be taken that the soil is not sour. It frequently happens that low, damp soil in shady locations becomes sour, and unfit for growing flowers. Sow the seeds in rows covering to a depth of one-eighth of an inch and when the plants are large enough thin out or transplant to stand six inches apart.

Forget-me-nots grow and spread very rapidly and will soon cover the whole space. They are fine for edging beds of other flowers or for bordering the shady walk or drive. Seed sown in the spring will bloom in the fall and if given the protection of coarse strawy manure during the severe winter weather, will bloom much more freely during the cool moist weather of the following spring. For spring flowering, seed may be sown any time up to the middle of August, and protected, as mentioned, during the winter.

Myosotis palustris is the true forget-me-not, but some of the newer varieties such as *M. P. var. semperflorens* and *M. sylvatica var. alpestris*, are stronger growing and, while equally pretty, have larger sprays of bloom. Keep the ground constantly moist.

Even on the barest of prairie farms, hardy flowers of many sorts grow with but little care. No home in the west need be without their bright faces.



Poa Trivialis Variegata (Four to Six Inches High) Used for Edging

be a welcome ornament in groups upon the lawn, up next to the verandah, or in a border next to the line fence, or to hide any unsightly object, such as outhouses. Any of them look well around a fountain or lake, or small stream of water, and all of them are