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SPECIES

Ophiopogon japonicus

COMMON NAME

Mondo grass, Fountain plant, monkey grass, mondo grass, lily turf, snakebeard

ORIGIN

Japan, Korea

DESIGN USE

Ornamental plant, ground cover for shady areas, border around beds, edging walkways and defining beds; tall varieties may be used as foundation plantings, groundcover around shady pools or garden statues, planters



HEIGHT

2-12 in

HABIT

They are rigid and curve back toward the ground (“recurve”) and resemble blades of turf grass. Leaves emerge in clumps from a network of rhizomes that grow just below the soil surface. With age the clumps will merge to form a soft dense carpet of foliage.

FORM

Grasslike clumps or mounds

Texture: Fine

Foliage: Dark green grasslike leaves

FLOWERS

The flowers are white to pale lilac, borne in a short raceme on a 5-10 cm stem. In summer small light purple flowers are produced but are of little interest as they are hidden in the dense foliage

FLOWERING PERIOD

Summer

FRUIT

The fruit is a blue berry 5 mm diameter.

VARIATIONS

‘Albus’ (white flowers), ‘Compactus’ and ‘Kyoto Dwarf’ (dwarf forms, not over 4-5 cm tall), and ‘Silver Dragon’ (variegated, with white-striped leaves). ‘Compactus’ is the most compact with leaves that grow only to about 2 in (5 cm) long to form very low dense mats that I think resemble a fuzzy moss. ‘Kyoto Dwarf’ grows 2-4 in (5-10 cm)

CLIMATIC TOLERANCES

Light: Shade to partial sun

Moisture: Water when soil is dry. Somewhat drought tolerant.

Hardiness: USDA Zones 7 - 11

HORTICULTURE

It grows well in full sun or partial shade. Propagation is from side shoots. Likes fertile, well drained soil, but adapts well. May be fertilized during warm months, but seldom needs encouragement; The standard size spreads fast, and may need active measures to control invasiveness! The dwarf varieties tend to be much slower growing. Offsets or divisions. Very easy to propagate.

REFERENCES

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ophiopogon_japonicus

http://www.floridata.com/ref/O/ophi_jap.cfm

http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/consumer/factsheets/groundcover/ophiopogon_japonicus.html

