

# Description

Most people are familiar with the large clumps of lush, grass-like foliage and creamy white feathery plumes of pampas grass (though pink varieties are available too). Pampas grass (*Cortaderia*) is an attractive ornamental grass that is popular in many landscapes. While they're extremely easy to grow, however, it's important to know what you're getting into before planting pampas grass around the home. Don't be so quick to plant it simply because it looks good. It's actually a very fast grower and can become quite large, anywhere from 5 and 10 feet high and wide, and even invasive.

## Growing Pampas Grass

Before growing pampas grass, be sure to put it somewhere in the landscape where it has plenty of room to grow, especially when planting more than one. When mass planting pampas grass, you'll have to space them about 6 to 8 feet apart. Pampas grass enjoys areas with full sun but will tolerate partial shade. It also tolerates a wide range of soil types but prefers moist, well-draining soil. Another plus side to growing pampas grass is its tolerance of drought, wind, and salt sprays—which is why you commonly see the plant along coastal regions. The grass is hardy in USDA zones 7-11, but in well protected areas, it can also be grown in Zone 6. It's not suited for cold regions unless grown in pots and brought indoors over winter and replanted outdoors in spring. Due to its large size, however, this isn't really practical.

## Care of Pampas

Once established, pampas grass care is minimal, requiring little maintenance other than watering in extreme drought. It should also be pruned each year to the ground. This is usually performed in late winter or early spring. Because of the plant's sharp foliage, the task of pruning should be done with great care using gloves and a long-sleeved shirt. However, with appropriate measures taken (for clumps well away from homes and buildings), you can also burn the foliage down to the green growth without any harm to the plant. While not required, pampas grass can be given a balanced fertilizer following pruning to help stimulate regrowth.