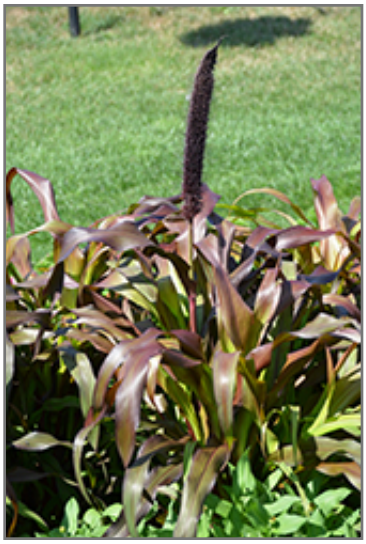
Jester Millet

Pennisetum glaucum 'Jester'



Jester Millet in bloom
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 5 feet

Spread: 3 feet

Spacing: 24 inches

Sunlight:

Hardiness Zone: (annual)

Description:

A colorful annual grass selected for its boldy coarse foliage which emerges light green and develops a brownish surface eventually becoming a spectacular blend of burgundy, green and yellow; showy black seed heads persist into winter

Ornamental Features

Jester Millet features bold plumes of white flowers rising above the foliage in mid summer. The flowers are excellent for cutting. Its attractive large grassy leaves emerge light green in spring, turning deep purple in color with curious chartreuse undersides and tinges of buttery yellow. As an added bonus, the foliage turns a gorgeous brick red in the fall. The black seed heads are carried on showy plumes displayed in abundance from early fall to late winter.

Jester Millet foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Jester Millet is an herbaceous annual with a shapely form and gracefully arching foliage. Its relatively coarse texture can be used to stand it apart from other garden plants with finer foliage.

This is a relatively low maintenance plant, and is best cleaned up in early spring before it resumes active growth for the season. Deer don't particularly care for this plant and will usually leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Jester Millet is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Mass Planting
- General Garden Use
- Container Planting

Planting & Growing

Jester Millet will grow to be about 4 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 3 feet. When grown in masses or used as a bedding plant, individual plants should be spaced approximately 24 inches apart. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 1 foot from the ground. This annual will normally live for one full growing season, needing replacement the following year.

This plant should only be grown in full sunlight. It is very adaptable to both dry and moist growing conditions, but will not tolerate any standing water. It is considered to be drought-tolerant, and thus makes an ideal choice for a low-water garden or xeriscape application. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This is a selected variety of a species not originally from North America. It can be propagated by division; however, as a cultivated variety, be aware that it may be subject to certain restrictions or prohibitions on propagation.

Jester Millet is a fine choice for the garden, but it is also a good selection for planting in outdoor pots and containers. Because of its height, it is often used as a 'thriller' in the 'spiller-thriller-filler' container combination; plant it near the center of the pot, surrounded by smaller plants and those that spill over the edges. It is even sizeable enough that it can be grown alone in a suitable container. Note that when growing plants in outdoor containers and baskets, they may require more frequent waterings than they would in the yard or garden.