

From The Bedford Extension Master Gardener HELP DESK

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QUESTION: WHY ARE THERE NO PLUMES ON MY PAMPAS GRASS?

A client called stating that one of her Pampas Grass hadn't bloomed for two years whereas the one next to it had. She wanted to know what was wrong with it, and what to do to get it to bloom again.



What healthy Pampas Grass should look like.
photo: city-data.com

LOG SHEET DIAGNOSIS

"Perhaps it has bloomed out?"

LOG SHEET RECOMMENDATION

"Try dividing plant. Fertilize 4 times yearly with balanced fertilizer."

MORE DETAILED INFORMATION

Pampas grass, *Cortaderia selloana*, is a large perennial native to Argentina, Brazil, and Chile. Mature plants grow in upright clumps with many long strap-like leaves, and can reach upwards of 10 to 20 feet tall and 6 feet wide. In late summer plumes rise several feet above the foliage. Pampas grass bears male and female flowers on separate plants; the female flowers being generally considered 'more showy.' Traditionally plumes of pampas

grass are silvery-white. Recent cultivars include pinkish-white plumes, while others have variegated vegetation or dwarf growth habit. It is hardy through USDA Plant Hardiness Zone 8, although some varieties are hardy to Zone 7.

Pampas grass can be invasive in hot dry growing conditions and IS considered invasive in California, parts of Hawaii, Africa, and New Zealand. Pampas grass seeds freely and can eventually crowd out native plants. Each plant can contain up to 100,000 seeds per flower head that are quickly dispersed in the wind.

Care or maintenance of pampas grass includes:

*Pruning in late winter prior to the new growing season. Use hedge shears, lopping shears, or power pruners to cut it back. Some websites state to cut it down to roughly two feet, while others suggest cutting it down close to the ground. Regardless of how low it is cut, wise gardeners will be sure to wear a long-sleeve shirt, long pants, and gloves when pruning to avoid being cut by the razor sharp leaf margins.

*Once the plant(s) has been pruned back, apply a light, broadcast application of complete fertilizer, like 8-8-8 or 10-10-10 to stimulate new growth.

*Propagation is through root division, either in early spring or in the fall.

REFERENCES

<http://plants.usda.gov/core/profile?symbol=COSE4>

<http://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.cfm?number=C983>

<http://www.gardenguides.com/95288-pampas-grass-care-maintenance.html>

<http://www.gardeningknowhow.com/ornamental/foilage/pampas-grass/growing-pampas-grass.htm>

<http://www.gardeningknowhow.com/ornamental/foilage/pampas-grass/pampas-grass-removal.htm#sthash.s7Q3MnIN.dpuf>

Answers provided herein were based on specific situations and growing conditions.

These recommendations may or may not be appropriate for all circumstances.

For specific recommendations for your particular situation please contact your local Cooperative Extension Office.

BEDFORD MASTER GARDENER HELP DESK:

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