



Ransomes Jaguar 4000



Excel 60" dozer



Olathe Model 150

although many engines have been especially designed for starting in cold conditions. Primer bulbs and other devices for easier manual starting are available.

Consumer Guide, a product ratings publication, also has prepared tips for using and maintaining snow throwers.

Among CG's suggestions:

- Keep the fuel tank filled with fresh fuel starting in the fall. Topping off the tank helps to fend off moisture condensa-

tion during times of temperature changes.

- Thoroughly check engine oil levels, including the gearbox, and follow manufacturer's instructions for oil types and proper levels. Change the oil at the end of the season, readying it for the next season.

- Wax the unit's chute and spout. This makes it easier for snow and ice to move along the passage, improving performance.

- Store the unit in an area that is the

same temperature as outside. If stored in a heated space, allow the snow blower to cool to the outside temperature before using it. This practice eases the problem of snow melting onto the surface of the unit itself. The melted snow then can ice up, leading to clogging.

- Add tire chains to improve traction, particularly on larger units. Cost: usually around \$35.

—Jack Simonds

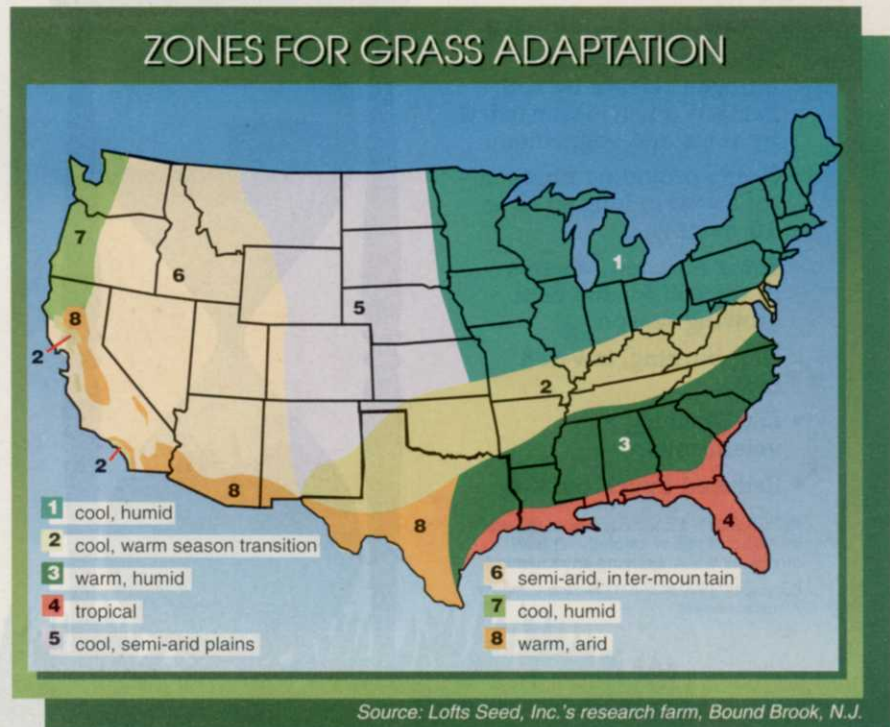
Ornamental grasses—for the bold

Ornamental grasses are growing in popularity as an alternative to flowering shrubs and other flowering perennials.

■ Tall grasses, rushes and sedges can easily and strikingly augment all landscape settings, says nurseryman Kurt Bluemel, a leading marketer, researcher and cheerleader for decorative (ornamental) grasses.

Shown here is a sampling of ornamental grasses adaptable to eight climatic regions of the U.S. It's a small sample; Kurt Bluemel, Inc. alone markets more than 120 varieties and searches worldwide for others to complement its 600 grasses now under research at the firm's Baldwin, Md., facility.

"If you stop and look, you can see how beautiful ornamental grasses are, how light affects their beauty. There are so many virtues that can be listed," says Bluemel. Ornamental grasses are growing in popularity as an alternative to flowering shrubs and other flowering perennials. Any long-stemmed grass that can be used as a substitute in these instances provides a good working definition of an ornamental grass, Bluemel says.



"Designing grasses come into first place for someone with a little more progressive thinking or someone thinking about cost effectiveness," says Bluemel. The varieties grow faster, require less maintenance and are harder in the face of disease, insect infestation and drought,

when compared with ornamental shrubs, Bluemel claims.

"The old guard," says the veteran nurseryman, "is deeply ingrained in round and cylindrical shapes. This conceals what this country has to offer."

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a. Chinese silvergrass (*Miscanthus sinensis*/*Eulalia japonica*): Zones 1-8



b. Eulalia grass (*Miscanthus sacchariflorus*): Zones 2, 3 and 8; some areas of zones 1, 5 and 6)



c. Maiden grass (*Miscanthus sinensis* 'Gracillimus'): Zones 2, 3, 4 and 8; some areas of zones 1, 5 and 6

In Europe and Asia, by contrast, public areas routinely are beautified by ornamental grasses. Some public areas in the U.S. have followed suit.

Golf course superintendents also have heard and understood his message.

"I tell (golf course superintendent) audiences that I'm the anti-turf man. I am the grass man, and I like my grass standing up, not cut off. I like my grass in golds and reds," says Bluemel, laughing. "In the roughs and bunkers, these plants can be good ground cover," he adds.

Landscapers, too, are learning the benefits—both practical and aesthetic—of adding a touch of pastel color to the scene, color only found in the tall ornamental grasses either indigenous or adaptable to North American climates.

—Jack Simonds



d. Plume grass/Ravennae grass (*Erianthus ravennae*): Zones 2, 3, 4, 7 and 8; some areas of zones 1, 5 and 6



e. Pampas grass (*Cortaderia selloana*): Zones 3, 4 and 8



**f. Fountain grass (*Pennisetum alopecuroides*): Zones 2, 3, 4, 7 and 8; some areas of zones 1, 5 and 6
Zones 3, 4 and 8**



g. Weeping lovegrass (*Eragrostis curvula*): Zones 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7



h. Sheep fescue (*Festuca ovina* glauca): Zones 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7

Photos courtesy of: Wayside Gardens (1 Wayside Lane, Hodges, SC 29695-0001; (800) 845-1124), Park Seed Co. and Lofts Seed, Inc.