



CHINESE FOUNTAIN GRASS

Chinese fountain grass, *Cenchrus purpurascens* (synonym: *Pennisetum alopecuroides*), is a non-native perennial grass native to Eastern Asia and Australia. This ornamental grass has escaped into natural areas, meadows and open woods, in all three counties in Delaware. There are several different cultivars of *Cenchrus purpurascens* sold commercially.

Chinese fountain grass forms dense clumps from 12"-48", which become more arching as they mature. The narrow, medium-to-deep green foliage can vary in length and width dependent upon the different cultivars. After the frost, the grass clumps will become a light tan. The inflorescence has a bottle brush appearance and the flowers can vary from a light pink to dark purple. Chinese fountain grass' inflorescences also turn tan as the seeds form and the spikes will persist into the late fall and early winter before shattering and spreading the seed.

Full sun and well-drained soil is the preferred habitat, but it will tolerate partial shade and poorer quality soils as evidenced by clumps of the fountain grass found in the more open forested areas of Thompson Island Nature Preserve in southern Delaware. It is documented in the mid-Atlantic and in several other states in the eastern half of the United States. Chinese fountain grass is not yet well established in Delaware, but it is on the watch list for some land managers.



QUICK FACTS

- Native to Eastern Asia and Australia
- Perennial, ornamental commercially sold
- Escaped into natural areas in all three counties in Delaware
- Bottle brush appearance to showy inflorescences
- Dense, clumping foliage

