

Did You Know?

Plants in your front yard could be contributing to this!



This plant is wreaking havoc on our sensitive desert!

Fountain grass is not native to the Sonoran Desert. It was introduced as an ornamental but has escaped neighborhoods to spread across the natural landscape.

Fountain grass displaces native plants and wildlife and is also a primary cause of catastrophic wildfires. Because of this, it is prohibited in landscaping by many local HOAs and could result in a fine for homeowners.

You can help!

By replacing fountain grass in your yard with a species native to the Sonoran Desert, you can reduce its spread and the potential for catastrophic wildfires.

You can replace your plants for free!

Trade in your fountain grass plants for native plants! Remove fountain grass from your yard or neighborhood (with permission), take a picture of each plant (showing you dug up the roots!), and dispose of the plant. Then bring that picture to the following location and receive a free native plant in return!

When and Where:

Saturday, March 9, 11 am - 2 pm,
Appaloosa Library (7377 E Silverstone Dr, Scottsdale, AZ 85255)

Saturday, March 16, 11 am - 2 pm,
Arabian library (10215 E McDowell Mountain Ranch Rd, Scottsdale, AZ 85255)

Sunday March 31, 1-4 pm,
Mustang Library (10101 N 90th St, Scottsdale, AZ 85258)

March 11-29 (Mon-Fri only),
9 am - 5 pm, McDowell Sonoran Conservancy office
(7729 E Greenway Rd, Ste 100, Scottsdale, AZ 85260)

For more information, contact McDowell Sonoran Conservancy at 480-998-7971.

Replacement plant:



Purple three awn (*Aristida purpurea* var. *purpurea*): A showy native grass. Tall perennial with attractive red-purple inflorescences.

Fountain Grass Fact Sheet

What is Fountain Grass?

Fountain grass is an ornamental plant that is invasive to Arizona. There are multiple varieties of this grass, none of which are recommended for planting in this state. Due to its invasiveness, capacity to increase wildfire risk, and competition with native plants, the variety known as green fountain grass (*Pennisetum setaceum*) is listed as a noxious weed in some states. Noxious weeds are regulated and prohibited to possess, grow, or sell in the state where listed.

What does it look like?

Large bunchgrass that can grow up to 5 feet tall.

- Plants grow in thick dense bunches.
- Leaves are flat to v-shaped, 6 inches to 2 feet long.
- Leaves have small white hairs where they come off the main stem.
- Inflorescence is a 3–12 inch long spike with purplish to bright green bristles.



How did it get here?

Fountain grass is native to Africa and Western Asia. It was originally brought to the United States to be used as an ornamental plant, but over time it has escaped cultivated areas into natural land in arid habitats throughout Arizona. Fountain grass has an adapted ability to disperse easily by wind, waterways, vehicles, people, and livestock. This has allowed the plant to rapidly spread and become invasive.

Why is it a problem?

- Fountain grass out-competes native plants for resources like water and soil nutrients needed to grow.
- It significantly increases the fire potential in areas where thick stands mature and dry out. Wildfire threatens neighboring housing communities and native Sonoran Desert.
- Fountain grass invasions along rivers or streams can lead to stream bank erosion and sedimentation. This changes the quality and quantity of water in our vital Arizona washes and river systems.
- Dense colonies of this plant decrease recreation opportunities and access to trails and walkways.



This project made possible through generous support from the Department of Forestry and Fire Management. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.