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Culture Report: Miscanthus 'Fire Dragon'

By Josiah Raymer

This ornamental grass boasts green to fiery-red, intensifying color all year long.



Miscanthus sinensis 'Fire Dragon' sets your garden ablaze with upright



green foliage that transforms into intensifying colors of red and orange.



When the temperature cools, this grass heats up. Soft, silvery plumes and scarlet foliage give 'Fire Dragon' a dramatic fire and smoke effect. If left



uncut, plumes provide long-lasting winter interest. Flower plumes are held well above the foliage.

'Fire Dragon' works well in a variety of applications from garden borders to mass plantings or as a focal point. Once mature it is both drought tolerant and deer resistant.

Pair 'Fire Dragon' with *Gaura lindeheimeri* 'Crimson Butterflies' and *Coreopsis grandiflora* 'Baby Sun' for a wave of burning color. Mix it with *Phlox paniculata* 'Bright Eyes', *Helictotrichon sempervirens* (Blue Oat Grass) and heuchera 'Black Taffeta' for a vibrant contrast. Or plant alone in an upright pot for a stunning specimen.

Easy to grow and maintain, 'Fire Dragon' grows to approximately 6 to 7 feet tall and spreads 3 to 4 feet. It prefers fertile well-drained soil in full sun to partial shade and is hardy in zones 6 through 9.

FINISHING

Plant one liner per 1-gallon pot. From a 38-cell liner, 'Fire Dragon' finishes

in an average of eight to 10 weeks for spring sales. At liner planting, drench with a broad-spectrum fungicide as a preventive measure.

FERTILIZER

Provide a liquid feed of approximately 150- to 200-ppm nitrogen. Alternatively, a low to medium rate of slow-release fertilizer may be used. Too high of a fertility rate can lead to plants that are leggy and prone to foliar issues.

IRRIGATION

Allow plant to dry between waterings, being careful not to overwater.

MEDIA

Use a fertile, well-draining mix such as a bark-based mix.

PH & EC

Maintain pH at 5.8 to 6.2. Target electrical conductivity (EC) levels at 0.8 to 1.2 using the 2:1 extraction method.

LIGHT

Provide high light levels of at least 5,000 foot-candles. Extending day length can help encourage growth during short days.

TEMPERATURES

Provide day temperatures of 70 to 80°F, no lower than 55° F at night. Warm soil temperatures (greater than 55° F) are very important as well. If the pots are on cold ground in the greenhouse, soil temperature may be lagging behind air temperature and slowing growth.

PGRS AND PINCHING

‘Fire Dragon’ typically does not require plant growth regulators (PGRs) and will not need pinching.

PEST CONTROL

Take preventative measures including managing humidity levels and maintaining good air circulation. Follow standard sanitation practices and monitor and scout carefully to prevent any insect and disease activity. Scout regularly for insects, and use a preventative broad spectrum fungicide program.

Josiah Raymer

Josiah Raymer is head grower and general manager for Emerald Coast Growers. He can be reached at 877.804.7277 or sales@ecgrowers.com. Go to www.ecgrowers.com for more information.

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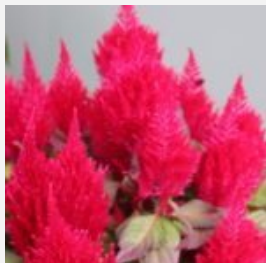
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75 Applewood Drive, Suite A
P.O. Box 128
Sparta, MI 49345

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