

How to Care for a Switch Grass

Panicum virgatum ‘Heavy Metal, ‘Northwind, ‘Shenandoah

SELECT SITE:

Light Requirements: Full Sun (more than 6 hrs/day), Part Sun (4-6 hrs/day), or Part Shade (4-6 hrs/day), although Full Sun is most desirable for color and shape

This grass will grow larger:

For ‘Heavy Metal: space 18 in. away from other plants and/or structures.

For ‘Northwind: space 24 in. away from other plants and/or structures.

For ‘Shenandoah: space 36 in. away from other plants and/or structures.

Prefers moist, sandy, or clay soils; tolerates a wide range of soils; will flop over in too rich of a soil

Garden Uses: Accent, group, massed, in the perennial border, wild garden, native garden, prairies, meadows, natural areas, water gardens, along pond edges, and as a seasonal screen

Ideal USDA Plant Hardiness Zones: 5,6,7,8,9

PLANT PREP:

Open box upon arrival, remove packing materials to let the plant “breathe”. Remove plastic bag, tape, and newspaper. Water well. There are drainage holes in the bottom of the pot so do this outside where the extra water will drain away.

HOLE PREP:

Dig saucer shaped hole. The depth is determined by measuring the height of the roots from root flare to bottom. The width is 2-3 times the root ball diameter. Using these calculations, the ideal hole for the new bush will be approximately 18” tall by 18” wide.

PLANTING:

Put garden soil in a wheelbarrow or on a tarp. Mix the garden soil with equal amounts of mulch, peat moss, and potting soil. Place plant in hole and adjust for aesthetics. Hold in place while adding more soil, until the hole is completely filled. Push soil down until firm. Do not plant the shrub deeper than it has already been growing. Water well immediately after planting. Mulch evenly to a depth of 2-3 inches being sure to stay at least 4” away from its trunk.

FUTURE MAINTENANCE:

Cut clumps to ground in late winter to early spring. If desired, fertilize in spring when new growth begins. Apply 2 tbsp. of an all-purpose slow release fertilizer upon the ground in a band around the plant at least 6” away from its stems.