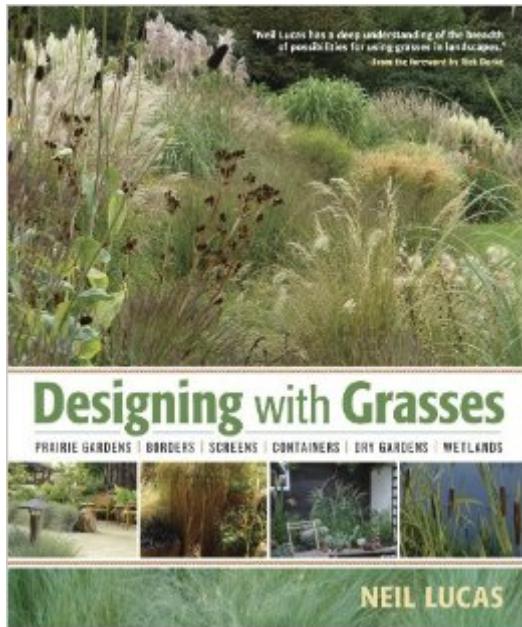


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# Designing With Grasses



## Synopsis

Designing with Grasses shows gardeners not just what grasses are available, but how to design with grasses in different settings, including meadows, lawns, green roofs, and more. Design ideas are supported by carefully devised maintenance techniques, design checklists that make designing achievable by gardeners of all ability levels, and lists of grasses best for a variety of situations, including low-maintenance, drought-tolerant alternatives to the traditional lawn grasses and grasses suitable for green roofs and erosion control. An encyclopedic A to Z of grasses includes profiles with information on growth and care.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Ornamental grasses have been slowly influencing the works of garden designers in a stealth manner. At first, we noticed them planted in Mediterranean-style gardens in South West USA, where drought filled summers are common. Then we began to see them in the prairie meadows of the Mid West. Eventually, they were included in revolutionary and boundary-breaking designs of public spaces in the North and North East. In tandem with these developments has been the rise in profile of grass-filled meadow gardens as an optional replacement for resource-depleting lawns. Today, ornamental grasses are considered as significant as perennials. Several publications have been written about designing with these plants and it is only a coincidence that, of them all, Neil Lucas' book has crossed my path. The author is a nine-time, award winning ornamental grass specialist, who lectures around the world. He is also the owner of Knoll Gardens, a nursery and

show garden, specializing in grasses, located in Dorset England. While many photographers are able to deliver the beauty of individual grasses, Mr. Lucas takes that art to a higher level by capturing the spirituality created by grasses when they are combined in a composition of other plants. Even though it is not a coffee table book, this publication delivers, on a smaller scale, the powerful photography fix that most gardeners crave. According to Mr. Lucas, the rising importance of ornamental grasses mirrors contemporary expectations that one ought to be able to create successful gardens with less effort than in the past. These plants are helpful in that regard. Their adaptability to a wide range of climates and growing conditions allows them to contribute more to a garden's success, using fewer plants and less labor.

I've always had a bit of a struggle with ornamental grasses. Too much tackling couch, then a highly invasive zebra grass at our first house have put me off them somewhat. Then my garden here goes from deep shade through to Mediterranean in just a few steps, so I haven't really managed to see how they'd fit into my current garden either. But then I started reading *Designing with Grasses*. The author Neil Lucas owns Knoll Gardens in Dorset, famed for its grass specialism. He has a deep understanding of grass communities both in the wild and in cultivation, so is the ideal person to showcase exactly what they can do for a garden. He's very much an advocate of 'right plant right place' and as there are species found in every area of the world, he's confident they have an important role to play in all kinds of situations. In the book Neil shows us both natural and planted grassland communities which provide structure for just as long as the more familiar perennials and shrubs, with the added bonus of movement to boot. They're also low-maintenance, tough and provide food and shelter for wildlife. There's lots of well chosen photographs illustrating their versatility and just how diverse this plant group is. I felt my prejudices beginning to crumble. On top of all this, Neil describes the making of the Decennium border at Knoll, designed to show-off grasses in a naturalistic style, which is a marked departure from our more traditional looking flowerbeds. Instead of the border being at its best for just one season, it's designed to provide interest for a much longer period without the need for staking or dead heading. The resulting combination of grasses with perennials photographed over the growing season well into winter opened my eyes to the possibilities.

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