



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

North American Native Grasses' Popularity Rises

Pensacola, Fla., November 1, 2008 – The latest trend to hit the green industry? Native North American grasses, according to **Emerald Coast Growers**, one of the nation's foremost producers of ornamental grass starter plants.

"Grasses native to North America are prized for their natural beauty and versatility, and they offer the added environmental bonus of attracting birds, butterflies and other beneficial wildlife," said Cheri Markowitz, Emerald Coast's sales manager.

Private landowners like Dan Evins, CEO of Cracker Barrel Old Country Store, have experienced grasses' benefits firsthand by turning hundreds of acres of farmland into native grasslands. Honing in on the habitats of the wildlife he draws to the property, Evins created a refuge for a wide variety of creatures to nest and feed.

Meanwhile, gardeners, growers and designers alike have discovered native grasses' growing power for texture, color and interest in plantings virtually anywhere.

"They're great choices to complement new and exotic plants, create mini habitats within landscape designs, or add impact to containers or beds as accents or specimens," said

Markowitz, who suggests the following grasses from Emerald Coast's Native Wonders program as additions to any grass program:

Andropogon virginicus (Broomsedge) Silvery-white leaves surround coarse stalks that turn orange during winter. Leafier than other grasses. Not good for forage.

Andropogon gerardii (Big Bluestem) Fuzzy flowers on stems up to eight feet tall. Summer (steel gray-blue) and fall (brown, red, purple) color. Especially useful as forage.

Bouteloua gracilis (Blue Grama Grass) Common in many U.S. arid or grassy areas. Perennial warm season bunchgrass with burgundy summer blooms. Dormant in winter.

Deschampsia cespitosa (Hair Grass) Dark green foliage with very fine, hair-like texture. Forms a neat, tufted clump with flower panicles several feet above foliage.

Chasmanthium latifolium (Wild Oats) Long stalks with dangling flowers similar to Sea Oats, a close relative. Good choice for landscaping but can be aggressive.

Panicum virgatum (Switch Grass) Dominant warm season prairie grass. Grows up to seven feet tall in big leafy clumps with single pyramid-shaped flowers on branch ends.

Schizachyrium scoparium (Little Bluestem) Probably the most abundant native grass. Smaller than Big Bluestem with flowers up and down tan, brown and wine-red branches.

Muhlenbergia capillaris (Pink Muhly Grass) Native to eastern U.S. and Mexico. Fine, glossy, dark-green foliage. Showy pink blooms float above plants like soft clouds.

For more information on Emerald Coast Growers' selection of native grasses, call 877-804-7277 or visit www.ecgrowers.com.

Emerald Coast Growers is proud to celebrate 17 years of success in the horticulture business. Known for their wide variety of perennial starter plants and specialty plants, Emerald Coast still maintains the distinction of being one of the industry's largest suppliers of ornamental grass liners to North American growers and retailers. With more than 400,000 sq. ft. of greenhouse space, 55 acres of farmland and locations in both the northeast and southeast, Emerald Coast can consistently supply top quality starter plants to growers throughout the United States. For more information, please visit www.ecgrowers.com.

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