

Community PlantAid Nursery

This week concentrating on some tufty plants that are available at the nursery at the moment.

Mondo Grass (*Ophiopogon japonicus*) is a grass-like perennial that has become popular in the garden as an edging plant or even as a softener between pavers and brickwork. They can be grown in sun or dry shade, tolerate frost and perform well as a low maintenance ground cover. I'm not sure if the plants in the nursery are the dwarf or slightly taller variety – the former grows to 10cm, the latter to 25cm. An all-round useful plant that will thicken up in time.

Morning-Flag (*Orthrosanthus multiflorus*) is a tufted grass-like perennial to about 50cm having a succession of pale blue 4cm flowers in late Spring. Grows in partial shade but is quite at home in full sun and doesn't need a lot of attention apart from maybe division when the clump enlarges. It is moderately frost hardy and not in any way invasive. Blue is an attractive colour in the garden so for a good effect perhaps put in maybe 3 or more. It can also be grown in a pot.

Peacock Iris (*Dietes bicolor*) is another tufty, this time from South Africa. I am loathe to mention this plant as it can, if precautions are not taken, become an environmental weed. It is seen in mass plantings in city scapes and has quite spectacular cream flowers with a brown blotch. If you were to attempt to grow this plant, then you should assiduously remove any seed heads and disposed of them appropriately. Probably a better choice would be Lomandra species (another tufty) which I think are in the nursery if you ask Shelly.

Spiderwort (*Tradescantia virginiana*) is a 40cm tall herbaceous perennial with a tufty appearance suitable for a range of garden conditions, especially light shade. Will grow amongst shrubs where it will be afforded some protection. Have 3-petalled violet-blue flowers, each dying after a day but in profusion over summer to autumn. Can be cut back over winter and will recover in the spring. Not weedy and invasive like "Wandering Creeper" (formerly "Wandering Jew") which is a relative.