DEVELOPING SOURCES OF NATIVE GRASSES FOR REVEGETATION IN FLORIDA, PART 2: WETLAND SPECIES

M.J. Williams and J. Grabowski

Plant Materials Specialist, USDA, NRCS, Gainesville, FL, 32614;
and Manager, USDA, NRCS, Brooksville, FL, Plant Materials Center,
Brooksville, FL 34601, respectively.

Often the most limiting factor in current revegetation efforts in Florida is availability and cost of planting material of native species, particularly wetland species. Part of the mission of the USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Brooksville Plant Materials Center (PMC) in Brooksville, FL, is to develop selections and commercial sources of native materials to restore ecosystem function. In the area of wetland species, the Brooksville PMC released 'Citrus' maidencane (*Panicum hemitomon*) selected germplasm in 1998. Maidencane is a native perennial, warm season, semi-erect grass that is adapted to aquatic or semi-aquatic sites. Citrus maidencane (PI421993) was collected in Citrus County, FL, and proved to be superior to 120 other accessions collected from throughout the state due to its rate of spread. This year, the Brooksville PMC is releasing a selection of blue maidencane (*Amphicarpum muhlenbergianum*). Blue maidencane (a.k.a., 'goobergrass' because of its geocarpic seed production) is a native, warm season grass that occurs in transitional areas between flatwoods and depressional landscapes where the water tables usually can be found within 12 inches of the soil surface. The initial blue maidencane collection consisted of over 150 accessions from throughout the state and the one selected for release rated high in its growth and establishment potential. Both of these plants need to be propagated vegetatively due to limited seed production, but standard agronomic field production methods can be used which greatly reduces cost. For more information on these and other restoration plants native to Florida, visit the Brooksville PMC website (http://www.fl.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/pmc/flplantmaterials.html).