Propagation

Marshhay cordgrass can be established successfully by using container grown plants propagated from vegetative propagules. A number of container sizes can be used to grow marshhay cordgrass commercially. The most widely used container is the trade-gallon (3/4 gallon). Trade-gallon containers have a higher per unit cost compared to smaller containers. Smaller containerized (e.g. 4 inch and cone pots) are the easiest type of container to grow marshhay and transport.

Bare-root plugs are the most economical of commercially available plant materials. Per unit production and transportation cost are considerably lower compared to container grown plants. Bare root plugs are generally limited to planting sites that are exposed to little or no wave energy.

Container grown plants are generally more reliable in successfully establishing stands of marshhay cordgrass. Bare-root plugs are highly successful when used on appropriate sites.

Availability

For more information on availability and use of 'Gulf Coast' marshhay cordgrass, contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Golden Meadow Plant Materials Center at the address below.

United States Department of Agriculture
NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service

Golden Meadow Plant Materials Center
438 Airport Road
Galliano, Louisiana 70354

Phone (985) 475-5280
Fax (985) 475-6545
Email gary.fine@la.usda.gov

For more information about this and other plants, please contact your local NRCS field office or Conservation District, and visit the PLANTS Web site<http://plants.usda.gov> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>

February 2005

'Gulf Coast'
Marshhay Cordgrass
(Spartina patens)

Golden Meadow
Plant Materials Center
Galliano, Louisiana

NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service

‘Gulf Coast’
Marshhay Cordgrass

‘Gulf Coast’ marshhay cordgrass (*Spartina patens* (Ait.) Muhl.) is a clonal release and is propagated vegetatively since it does not typically produce adequate seed quantities for effective seed production. Gulf Coast has proven to be a successful plant for use in Louisiana’s coastal restoration programs. Gulf Coast has proven superiority to other Louisiana and Texas ecotypes of marshhay cordgrass that have been assembled and tested. This plant material has also proven superior in field evaluation plantings to commercial sources of ‘Flageo’ and ‘Sharp’ marshhay cordgrass.

Gulf Coast is an important plant in maintaining the stability of brackish to saline marshes. Gulf Coast is recommended for marsh restoration, shoreline and levee stabilization, and coastal beach and barrier island sand dune enhancement and stabilization. Gulf Coast is also an effective soil stabilizer used on interior mudflats, dredge fill sites, and other areas of loose and unconsolidated soils associated with marsh restoration. Gulf Coast will persist and provide an important conservation tool for coastal restoration and preservation.

Description

Marshhay cordgrass is a native, warm season, strongly rhizomatous, perennial grass that grows to 4 feet in height. The slender stems are erect and stiff (wire like) with narrow linear leaves that average 1/4 inch in width, are involute (rolled inward) and sometimes flat. Leaf blades are shiny, dark green on the upper surface and rough with prominent veins on the lower surface. Leaf tips are tapered to a sharp point. Long slender rhizomes extend in straight lines after forming aboveground mats of stems. The inflorescence is an open panicle with 2 to 6 spikes and short or sessile pedicels that open from the central axis. Marshhay cordgrass is found growing in saline to brackish marshes, sandy beaches and low dunes, tidal flats, and marsh ridges. It is most abundant in Louisiana’s brackish marshes. Plant detritus from this species is important for soil building, and it is also important to aquatic food chains.

Adaptation

Gulf Coast was originally collected vegetatively from Cameron, Louisiana. It has been tested and found to be adapted to coastal areas of Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas. Gulf Coast is also recommended for conservation planting in coastal areas of the north central Gulf of Mexico basin. Gulf Coast is a facultative halophyte that can be successfully planted in brackish and salt marshes, marsh ridges, coastal beaches, barrier islands, and restored marsh where dedicated sediments are used. Gulf Coast has been proven effective for marsh restoration, shoreline and levee stabilization, and coastal beach and barrier island sand dune enhancement and stabilization.