

PLANTING GUIDE
PANICUM AMARUM

Bitter panicum

Description: Perennial, warm season grass growing to a height of 7 feet with a growth habit ranging from erect to prostrate. The leaves are 1/4-1/2 inch wide, 7-20 inches long, smooth without hair, and bluish in color. A robust grass, it spreads slowly from short, strong rhizomes forming open clumps. Small quantities of poor quality seed are produced on compact panicles 6-12 inches long and 2-4 inches wide.

Native Habitat and Range: Coastal dunes and sandy shores from New Jersey to Florida and Texas.

Conservation Use: The principal use is in coastal dune erosion control and it may have a role in stabilizing other dry, sterile areas such as roadsides and minespoils. Potted and bareroot plants are available commercially. Currently the cultivars 'Northpa' and 'Southpa' are in commercial trade.

Site Preparation: Generally none required.

Plant Material: Freshly dug bareroot tillers, rooted stem cuttings, or unrooted stem cuttings:

Time of Planting: Late fall with cuttings; late winter or early spring with potted plants; late spring (beginning of rainy season) with young tillers.

Spacing: Plant potted plants and bare root plants in staggered rows 2-3 feet apart with plants 2 feet apart in each row. Bury unrooted stems end to end in trenches 4-6 inches deep and 2-3 feet apart leaving the top 6-10 inches of the stem exposed. Plant unrooted cuttings three to a hole in staggered rows 2-3 feet apart with holes 2 feet apart in each row.

Depth: Place plants 8-10 inches or deeper in moist soil.

Fertilizer: Apply fertilizer according to soil test recommendations. Application of fertilizer may be split.

Maintenance: Restrict traffic and livestock. Livestock relish Bitter panicum and overgrazing was responsible for the decrease of it in the 19th century.

