

Propagation & Establishment

Fourchon bitter panicum is established from container grown or bare root plant materials. Container grown plants have been proven to be more reliable in establishing stands. Most any plant container size can be used successfully. Propagation for container production is accomplished by plant divisions or cuttings. Rhizomes or stem nodes are used for cuttings. Sand to sandy loam potting medium is preferred, however, sand peat mix or other prepared soil mixes can be used successfully. When propagating from stem cuttings, prepare stem sections with two nodes per cutting. Cuttings are placed vertically in the container with both nodes buried in the medium.

Field plantings are established by planting on 2 to 5 feet centers between plants. Spacing is dependent on the protective cover desired. Bitter panicum can be established in the fall with rooted cuttings, in the late winter or early spring with tillers, or year around with containerized plants. Fourchon will grow on low fertility soils. If fertilization is desired, place a slow release tablet with each plant while planting or broadcast a balanced fertilizer such as 13-13-13 after planting.



Availability

For more information on availability and use of Fourchon bitter panicum, contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Golden Meadow Plant Materials Center at the address, phone number, or web sites provided below.

Golden Meadow Plant Materials Center
438 Airport Rd
Galliano, LA 70354
(ph) 504-475-5280
(fax) 504-475-6545
Visit our web sites at:



<http://la.nrcs.usda.gov>
<http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov>

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Fourchon Bitter Panicum (*Panicum amarum* *var. Amarum*)



*Golden Meadow
Plant Materials Center
Galliano, Louisiana*

Fourchon Bitter Panicum

Fourchon bitter panicum (*Panicum amarum* Ell. var. *amarum*) is recommended for beach dune enhancement and stabilization on coastal beaches and barrier islands of the north central Gulf of Mexico basin. Fourchon is an early colonizing species that can tolerate the harsh environment of the dune system which is subject to salt spray, storm surges, occasional inundation, high temperatures, low soil moisture and fertility, sand abrasion, and smothering by drifting sand.

Fourchon bitter panicum is an ideal dune plant. The above ground portion of the plant reduces wind velocity allowing sand to drop out of the wind stream and accumulate. The below ground portion of the plant stabilizes and holds the sand in place with an extensive fibrous root and rhizome system.

Fourchon originated from a native stand of bitter panicum found growing on a coastal beach in Lafourche Parish, Louisiana. It was selected for its vigorous growth, persistence after storm events, and performance in stabilizing dunes enhanced or created with sand fencing structures.



Stabilization of newly created sand dune



Inflorescence and floret

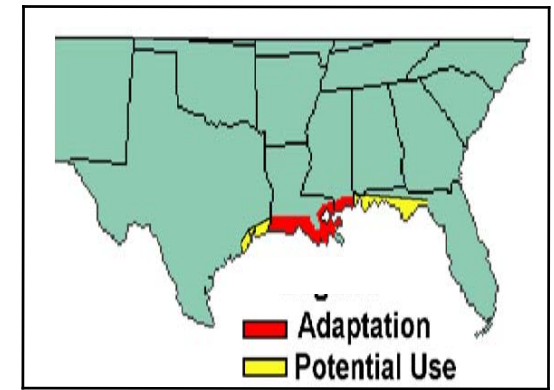
Description

Bitter panicum is a native, warm-season, perennial grass that spreads primarily by rhizomes or by rooting from lower nodes of plant stems (culms). Fourchon will typically grow to a height of 4 feet with erect to decumbent stems. Stems can reach 8 feet in length. Leaves are 1/2 inch in width and may reach 20 inches in length. Leaves and culms are smooth and bluish in color. The inflorescence is a panicle 12 to 15 inches in length that is contracted in maturity. Flowering begins in September and continues through December. Bitter panicum is a hexaploid ($2n=54$), consequently, seeds of Fourchon are consistently sterile. Reproduction is vegetative by lateral tillering from established plants. Year long growth occurs where sand is actively accumulating, but winter cover is more sparse.



Adaptation

The native range or distribution of bitter panicum is along the coastal beach system of the north central Gulf of Mexico basin. Fourchon bitter panicum has been tested and has proven performance in plantings on coastal beaches of Mississippi and Louisiana.



Known range of adaptation and potential use of Fourchon Germplasm