

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

ECOLOGICAL SCIENCES DIVISION

WASHINGTON, D.C.

FORT VALLEY STATE COLLEGE

SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE, HOME ECONOMICS AND ALLIED PROGRAMS

FORT VALLEY, GEORGIA

NOTICE OF RELEASE OF 'FLAGEO' MARSHHAY CORDGRASS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

and

SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE FORT VALLEY STATE COLLEGE

NOTICE OF RELEASE OF 'FLAGEO' MARSHHAY CORDGRASS

The United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service and the Fort Valley State College, School of Agriculture, announce the naming and release of 'FLAGEO' marshhay cordgrass, Spartina patens (Ait.) Muhl.

'Flageo' marshhay cordgrass was developed at the Soil Conservation Service Plant Materials Centers at Americus, Georgia and Brooksville, Florida. It was originally tested at the Americus, Georgia Plant Materials Center beginning in 1972.

'Flageo' marshhay cordgrass is a selection from a native plant collection by Karl Graetz, SCS Plant Materials Specialist, from a saltmarsh near Manteo, North Carolina in 1966.

'Flageo' was selected for release because it has better adaptation to the South Atlantic and Gulf Coastal area, and it produced a more dense vegetative cover, established more quickly and exhibited better tolerance to inundation than other accessions. It is well adapted on tidal streambanks from Virginia to Texas and has performed better than the cultivar 'Avalon' in the Southeastern United States of America.

'Flageo' marshhay cordgrass is a strongly rhizomatous perennial grass that grows about three feet tall. The rhizomes are long and slender, having a diameter of 1/8- to 1/4-inch and produce most of the new growth. The slender, flexible culms support cauline leaves.

'Flageo' is somewhat typical for the species. It has medium textured, flexible culms with dark green leaves. Culm production per unit area exceeds that of most other cordgrasses. The rate of spread is greater and the root system

is more dense and finer textured than most. Leaf height is **28-32** inches. Leaf blade length is longer than for most strains; many leaves are **10-16** inches long.

The leaf blades are less than **1/4-inch** wide, vary from two to sixteen inches long, taper to slender tips, and **are** divergent. They are glabrous on the underside, usually rolled inward with the upper surface concealed. Leaf color usually is dark green. One to four spikes are formed on a smooth rachis. The spikes, less than three inches long, usually are purple.

Field plantings of 'Flageo' were made in 14 states and evaluation data recorded for eight years. Data taken from more than **44** individual sites indicated that 'Flageo' was superior to all other strains of marshhay cordgrass in the southeast comparisons for beach stabilization.

The principle conservation use of 'Flageo' marshhay cordgrass is to vegetate and stabilize saline, brackish, and fresh water tidal streambanks. 'Flageo' is salt tolerant and can be established above the high tide elevation. It is well adapted on sandy to clay soils, can tolerate occasional inundation by storm tides, and has the ability to trap and grow through thin deposits of sand, It can also be used to stabilize critical areas on inland sites in Alabama, Georgia and Florida.

Breeder fields of 'Flageo' will be maintained by the Soil Conservation Service and Fort Valley State College, School of Agriculture. Foundation quality vegetative material will be distributed to potential growers in accordance with established procedures and will be available from the Brooksville Plant Materials Center, Brooksville, FL **34601**, Americus Plant Materials Center, Americus, GA **31709**, and Fort Valley State College, School of Agriculture, Fort Valley, GA **31030**.

James B. Swann

Director, Ecological Science Division
United States Department of Agriculture
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Washington, D. C.

7/17/90

Date

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29, May '90

Date
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