

Establishment for Field Production

Coastal panicgrass seed can be produced on almost any well-drained, tillable soil. Spring seeding is recommended using conventional row planters, or a no-till drill with ever 4th seed port taped off.

In silty or medium textured soils, plant seed 1/2 to 1 inch deep. In coarse textured soils, place seed up to 2 inches deep. Seed stand management seems best when rows are on 40-42" centers. For more details on establishing 'Atlantic' seed production fields, refer to Publication TN-NJPMC-0509 *Production Guidelines for 'Atlantic'* to be posted on our web site provided below.

Establishment for Conservation Use

For more information about conservation recommendations and establishment, refer to NRCS Publication *Critical Area Treatment Guide for the Northeast*, and TN-NJPMC-05-10 *Conservation Uses for 'Atlantic' Coastal Panicgrass* which will be posted soon on our website provided below.

Locate and Obtain Plant Material

The Cape May PMC propagates, tests and selects plants best-suited for conservation practices in the eastern U.S. Coastal Plain area. The plants are then released to the commercial nursery industry who make breeder and foundation material available to the public. A list of plant and seed vendors is available from the PMC or online at:

<http://www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov/plants.html>

Opportunities to Participate

NRCS Field Offices, District Employees, Partners and Volunteers: We need your help!

The Cape May PMC serves a nine-state area extending from Massachusetts to North Carolina. The plant developmental process used by the Cape May PMC relies heavily on the cooperation of our conservation partners to locate native plant stands; collect materials and ship them to Cape May; locate suitable plant testing sites; record plant performance data; and publish new scientific findings. Call the Cape May PMC for more details about how you can help.

Tours Available

Visitors are always welcome at the PMC. The center is open Monday through Friday. Please call the PMC to schedule your visit.

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Cape May Plant Materials Center (PMC)



'Atlantic' Coastal Panicgrass *Panicum amarum* *var. amarulum* (A.S. Hitchc. & Chase) P.G. Palmer

*Cape May PMC products are
helping people help the land
through better plants and science*

Coastal Panicgrass



Hitchcock 1951

Scientific Name:

Panicum amarum var. *amarulum*
(A.S. Hitchcock & Chase) P.G. Palmer

Alternate Common Names:

Coastal panicgrass, dune switchgrass.

Description:

Coastal panicgrass is a tall, robust, native warm season perennial grass that spreads primarily by tillers, limited rhizomes and seed. Growth habit is upright and resembles a bunch grass, although it produces limited short rhizomes. Plant are bluish, green, leafy and multi-stemmed. Large quantities of viable seed are produced.

Plant Distribution:

Though saltmeadow cordgrass is found in the shaded states, 'Atlantic' is only recommended for use from Long Island NY to Texas. Prior to using any plant material determine its local invasive status.



Coastal Systems and Coastal Panicgrass

America's beautiful and diverse coastline attracts millions of tourists each year. The sand dune systems found along these shores are an inherent part of the tourist "experience."

In addition to supporting an industry vital to the region, these dunes provide habitat for many species of wildlife. During hurricanes and storms, sand dunes protect this habitat, our land, property and, at times, our very lives.

Sand dunes erode by design as they absorb storm energies. In the eastern United States 'Atlantic' coastal panicgrass is widely used to stabilize dunes that protect our communities. Coastal panicgrass increases the protective values of sand dunes that serve and protect the American public and the needs of our diverse wildlife species.

Plant Selection Process

NRCS conducts its plant development activities in keeping with the philosophy of Dr. Franklin J. Crider, first leader of what is now the Plant Materials Program. Dr. Crider maintained that "in most cases, nature has evolved a plant for almost every growing condition."

In developing 'Atlantic', NRCS used the Comparative Observation Evaluation process. Many populations of the same species were planted side by side in evaluation plots. Populations were observed and compared to each other. The population with promising traits and characteristics was isolated, increased, tested in multiple environments and released to the commercial nursery industry.

Selection Attributes

In a trial of 17 selections of the species from native stands, 'Atlantic' was found to have more seedling vigor, uniform characteristics and more resistant to rust.

Origin

'Atlantic' originated from a naturally occurring stand located at the Back Bay Wildlife Refuge near Princess Anne, Virginia in 1955.

Adaptation

It is adapted to the coastal plain, and the piedmont region from Massachusetts to Texas, and has proven to be winter hardy in areas where the average low temperature is between -10 and 0 degrees F.

In coastal sand dune systems, 'Atlantic' coastal panicgrass occupies non-sand-accretion zones and the back dune areas. PMC staff members are working closely with the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers on beach replenishment projects to refine the technique for directly seeding 'Atlantic' while installing 'Cape' American beachgrass on replenishment projects.

Application and Uses

- ◆ USDA Conservation Programs
- ◆ Stabilizing wind blown sand
- ◆ Creating new dune systems
- ◆ Stabilizing beach replenishment projects
- ◆ Enabling natural succession on critical areas, gravel mines, mining spoil, coal gob piles, and many sites with hot/infertile soils