

Description

Marshhay cordgrass (*Spartina patens*), often referred to as saltmeadow cordgrass, is a native warm season, strongly rhizomatous perennial grass, well adapted to sandy and clay soils, and will tolerate occasional inundation. Sharp is a larger specimen than Avalon and Flageo, other released cultivars. The long (20-24 inch), narrow, dark green leaf blades roll inward. One to four spikes, less than three inches long, are usually purple. Plant height averages 30-38 inches, excluding seedhead.

The natural habitat for marshhay cordgrass is about one foot above the high tide elevation along saline and brackish waterbodies. On back dune areas, several rows of smooth cordgrass or bitter panicum would usually be established below the marshhay cordgrass. On sites with sand movement due to wind currents, sea oats would be planted above the marshhay. It will grow satisfactorily on upland sites such as agricultural land if a moderate amount of moisture is available.

Use

Three principal conservation uses for Sharp marshhay cordgrass are listed to the right. It is also useful on road banks, minespoils, and saline oil seep areas. The plant has the ability to trap and grow



1. Stabilizes shorelines and coastal back dunes



2. Stabilizes inland waterways and gullies

through thin layers of deposited sand, making it desirable for stabilizing areas and reducing erosion.



3. Reclaims nutrients through filter strips in agricultural and municipal wastewater-irrigated fields

Sharp takes longer to establish than other strains; however, once established it exceeds others in the rate of spread, height, leaf width and length. For best establishment success on back dune areas, ample moisture should be available. The use of potted plants is recommended for rapid stabilization.

Adaptation

Sharp has performed well throughout the tested areas from South Carolina through Texas. Other strains may perform better in areas north of South Carolina.

Establishment

Plant early spring to July 1, with late spring preferred for best success. Along saline and brackish water bodies, plant above the mean high tide elevation. Potted plants are recommended rather than bare-root stock for tidal plantings. However, if bare-root stock is used, the roots should be dipped in a super-absorbent moisture-retaining agent similar to Terra-Sorb. Plant 4 to 8 inches or deeper in moist soil, 12 to 24 inches apart. Place and mix 1 to 2 ounces of a controlled release fertilizer in the planting hole. The same amount of soluble fertilizer placed in a hole to the side of the plant may also be used to obtain the desired results.

Installation of a temporary irrigation system and mulch, to retain moisture, is desirable. Foot traffic should be restricted from the planting site.

Production

Production fields may be established from February to July by planting three to five tiller plants spaced one foot apart. Planting in rows 4 ½ feet apart will accommodate mechanical diggers. Fertilizer should be applied on the basis of a soil analysis. In lieu of a soil test, apply 500 lbs per acre of 10-10-10 fertilizer at transplanting time. The following June, broadcast over the field 400 lbs per acre of 10-10-10 fertilizer.

Harvesting of plants should not occur until the end of the second growing year. To maintain the high quality of the stock, it is recommended the plants be dug and replanted in a new tilled area. Plants may be dug for shipment any time the ground is not frozen.

Availability

Foundation quality vegetative materials may be obtained from the Brooksville Plant Materials Center.

For More Information

Brooksville Plant Materials Center
14119 Broad Street
Brooksville, Florida 34601
Phone: 352-796-9600
<http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/flpmc/>

or

Plant Materials Specialist for Florida
P.O. Box 141510
Gainesville, FL 32614
Phone: 352-338-9544

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Sharp

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Spartina patens



Brooksville Plant Materials Center, Florida

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