

A Conservation Plant Released by the Natural Resources Conservation Service
Cape May Plant Materials Center, Cape May, NJ

‘Avalon’ Saltmeadow Cordgrass

Spartina patens (Ait.) Muhl.



‘Avalon’ saltmeadow cordgrass (Spartina patens) (Ait.) Muhl. is a cultivar released from the Cape May Plant Materials Center in Cape May, NJ in 1987. Photo by, USDA NRCS Plant Materials Center, Cape May, NJ.

‘Avalon’ saltmeadow cordgrass is a cultivar released by the Cape May Plant Materials Center, Cape May NJ, in 1987.

Description

Saltmeadow cordgrass is a rhizomatous, perennial, warm-season grass that grows to 2½ ft (0.75 m) tall. It forms dense vegetative colonies that occur between the high tide line and higher marsh elevations. The rolled leaf blades are typically 6–12 in (12–30 cm) long and 0.1–0.2 in (0.25–0.5 cm) wide. Leaves are shiny and dark green above, with prominent veins underneath. Leaf blades tend to droop and are wiry in appearance. From late June to October an inflorescence composed of 2–10 in (5–25 cm) long spikelets emerges at the end of the dark green stem. The flowers are wind pollinated and self-sterile (Leif, 2013).

Saltmeadow cordgrass is a versatile plant that can be found in soils from coarse sands to silty clays with a pH from 4.5–7.1, under both saturated and non-saturated conditions. It is found in brackish marshes, on sand dunes, and in tidal flats.

‘Avalon’ was observed to have a superior and denser rooting system. This naturally evolved trait enabled this genotype to provide better site stabilization on high energy locations.

Source

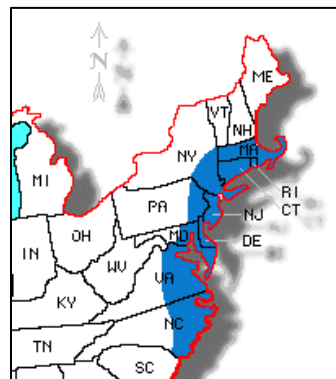
This material originated from naturally occurring salt marsh stands located near the Borough of Avalon, in Cape May County, New Jersey. ‘Avalon’ was released as a cultivar to the commercial nursery market in 1987.

Conservation Uses

‘Avalon’ saltmeadow cordgrass can be used in estuarine and marsh habitat restoration, shoreline protection, and dune stabilization and restoration projects. Saltmeadow cordgrass has also been effective in inhibiting the spread of the aggressive noxious weed *Phragmites australis* (Leif, 2013). It can be used to help remediate marshes affected by oil spills, provide food and cover for wildlife, and has been cut and dried as salt hay for livestock. There is limited application for its use on critical areas.

Area of Adaptation and Use

‘Avalon’ saltmeadow cordgrass was developed for use specifically in the Northeast to Mid-Atlantic coasts from Massachusetts south to North Carolina.



Map of ‘Avalon’ saltmeadow cordgrass area of adaption and recommended area of use.

For a current distribution map, please consult the Plant Profile page for this species on the PLANTS Web site.

Establishment and Management for Conservation Plantings

Saltmeadow cordgrass production fields are established with vegetative divisions. Each planting unit should consist of approximately 10–15 stems (leaves and roots trimmed) and be installed with a vegetable transplanter on 18 in centers. For more details on establishing production fields, refer to the publication *Bare-root Avalon Saltmeadow Cordgrass Planting Guide* (ID# 9910) at the website listed below.

Ecological Considerations

This plant may become weedy or invasive and may displace more desirable vegetation if not properly

managed. Please consult with your local NRCS field office, Cooperative Extension Service office, or state natural resource or agriculture department regarding its status and use. Weed information is also available from the PLANTS Web site at plants.usda.gov.

Seed and Plant Production

Saltmeadow cordgrass does not spread well via seed and seedlings have low vigor. Therefore, it is most often vegetatively propagated and installed in nursery rows. A single planting unit can grow up to fifty stems in one growing season (Leif, 2013). Controlling competing weeds will help produce quality plants.

Availability

For conservation use: For sources of supply for ‘Avalon’ saltmeadow cordgrass or for more information on the availability, planting and use, contact your local NRCS office or Soil and Water Conservation District

For seed or plant increase: ‘Avalon’ saltmeadow cordgrass is an eastern US cultivar release. Foundation seed can be obtained from the Cape May Plant Materials Center for the purpose of large-scale increase.

For more information, contact:
USDA-NRCS
Cape May Plant Materials Center
1536 Route 9 North
Cape May Court House, NJ 08210
phone: (609)465-5901
fax: (609)465-9284
<http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/njpmc/>

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For additional information about this and other plants, please contact your local USDA Service Center, NRCS field office, or Conservation District <<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>>, and visit the PLANTS Web site <<http://plants.usda.gov>> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <http://www.plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov>

References

Leif, J. 2013. Plant Guide for saltmeadow cordgrass (*Spartina patens*). USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Rose Lake Plant Materials Center. East Lansing, Michigan 48823

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