



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

Mallotonia gnaphalodes¹

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Introduction

Sea Lavender is one of the best adapted small shrubs or tall ground covers for the seaside landscape (Fig. 1). Its pubescent, silvery foliage is borne in tufts toward the ends of branches. Small white flowers are produced year-round among the developing leaves. Despite their small size, their abundance allows them to provide a nice showy display. Plants grow slowly, eventually reaching about 5-feet-tall. Many are smaller than this when exposed to direct salt spray, but they often grow very wide.

General Information

Scientific name: *Mallotonia gnaphalodes*

Pronunciation: mal-loe-TOE-nee-uh naf-fuh-LOE-deez

Common name(s): Sea-Lavender

Family: *Boraginaceae*

Plant type: shrub; ground cover

USDA hardiness zones: 10B through 11 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: native to Florida

Uses: reclamation plant; border; mass planting; ground cover

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

Description

Height: 2 to 5 feet

Spread: 6 to 20 feet

Plant habit: spreading

Plant density: dense

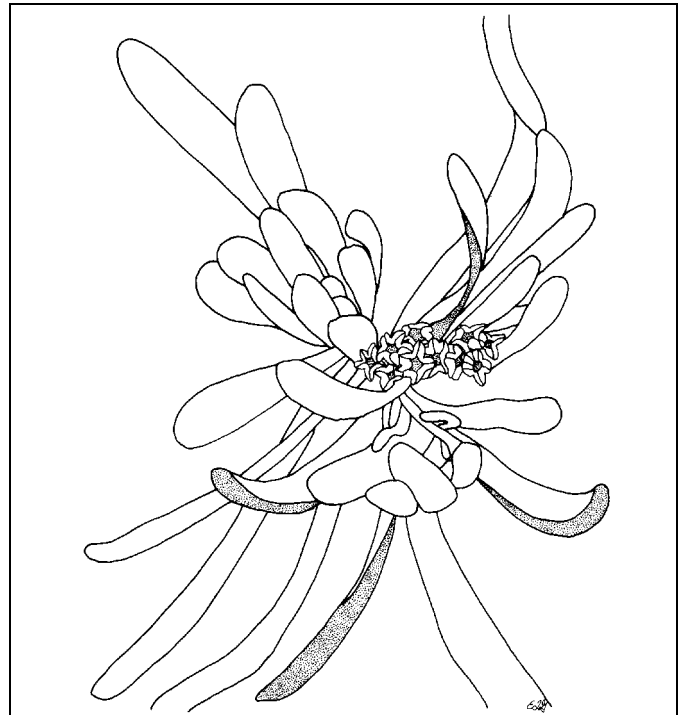


Figure 1. Sea-Lavender.

Growth rate: slow

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

1. This document is Fact Sheet FPS-379, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: October, 1999 Please visit the EDIS Web site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: entire
Leaf shape: spatulate
Leaf venation: none, or difficult to see
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches
Leaf color: blue or blue-green
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white
Flower characteristic: fall flowering; winter flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: round
Fruit length: less than .5 inch
Fruit cover: fleshy
Fruit color: black
Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not particularly showy; typically multi-trunked or clumping stems
Current year stem/twig color: green
Current year stem/twig thickness: medium

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in full sun
Soil tolerances: acidic; alkaline; sand; loam;
Drought tolerance: high
Soil salt tolerances: good
Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: usually not a problem
Winter interest: no special winter interest
Outstanding plant: plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more
Invasive potential: not known to be invasive
Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

Sea Lavender is best used in seaside plantings with other dune resistant vegetation. Planted inland, they often develop root rot in irrigated landscapes. A full sun location keeps foliage dry and helps maintain plant health. Plants in partial shade thin and grow poorly.

Pests and Diseases

Root rot is probably the biggest problem in irrigated landscapes.