



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

Alternanthera maritima¹

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Introduction

This drought tolerant, ground hugging creeper thrives in its native habitat on the seaside dunes (Fig. 1). Stems creep along the sand, rooting at the nodes and sending up new shoots. The plant quickly covers an area in this manner growing to about 6-inches tall.

General Information

Scientific name: *Alternanthera maritima*

Pronunciation: al-tur-nan-THEER-uh muh-RIT-tim-uh

Common name(s): Alternanthera

Family: *Amaranthaceae*

Plant type: herbaceous; ground cover

USDA hardiness zones: 9 through 11 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: native to Florida

Uses: ground cover; cascading down a wall

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

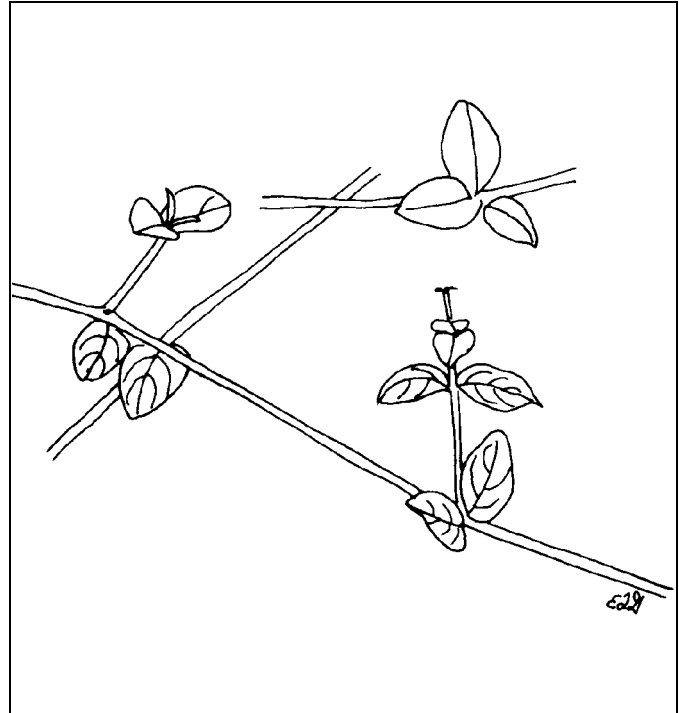


Figure 1. *Alternanthera*.

Description

Height: .5 to 1 feet

Spread: depends upon supporting structure

Plant habit: spreading

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: fast

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: elliptic (oval)

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf blade length: less than 2 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: unknown

Flower characteristic: unknown

Fruit

Fruit shape: unknown

Fruit length: less than .5 inch

Fruit cover: unknown

Fruit color: unknown

Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not applicable

Current year stem/twig color: green

Current year stem/twig thickness: medium

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in full sun

Soil tolerances: acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam;

Drought tolerance: high

Soil salt tolerances: good

Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: may self-seed each year

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

Plant on 3- to 4-foot centers in order to quickly establish a dense ground cover. Plants in the full sun grow best. The moderately thick stems will cascade and cover a wall nicely.

Pests and Diseases

Plants in the full sun should not be affected by lethal pest and disease problems.