Mallotonia gnaphalodes
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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

Growth rate: slow
Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Figure 1. Sea-Lavender.
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.