UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

Fact Sheet FPS-548
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Sesuvium portulacastrum[1]

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Introduction

Sea Purslane is a native, herbaceous perennial found along the coasts of Florida (Fig. 1). It grows on the ocean side of the dunes down to the high tide mark. The thick, fleshy leaves are borne on succulent, reddish-green stems that branch regularly forming dense stands close to the ground. Small, showy pink flowers are borne more or less continually throughout the year. Each flower opens for only a few hours each day. These plants help build the dunes by catching sand in between stems and leaves. The plant is closely related to the more familiar Purslane commonly found in garden centers.

General Information

Scientific name: *Sesuvium portulacastrum*
Pronunciation: sess-SOO-vee-um por-too-luh-KASS-strum
Common name(s): Sea Purslane
Family: *Portulaceae*
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
Availablity: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

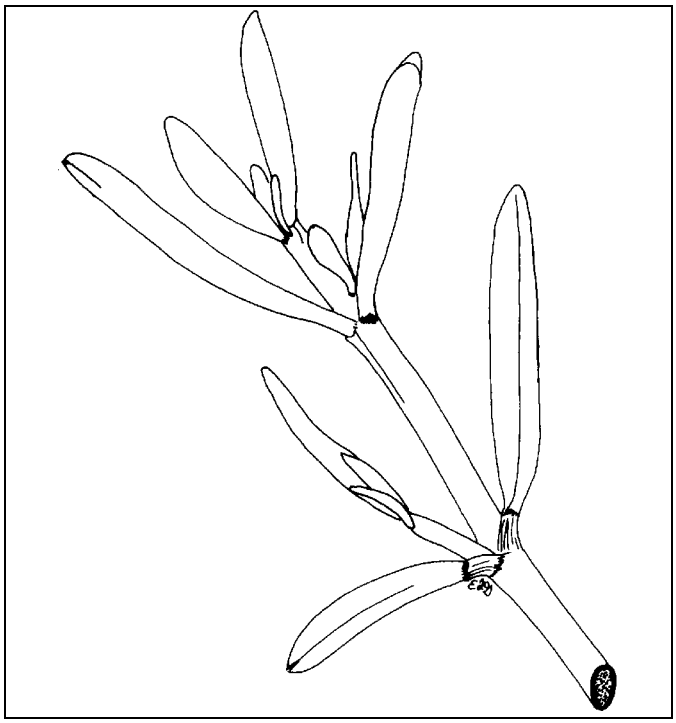

Figure 1. Sea Purslane.

Description

Height: .5 to 1 feet
Spread: depends upon supporting structure

Plant habit: spreading
Plant density: moderate
Growth rate: moderate
Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

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

Flower

Flower color: pink
Flower characteristic: year-round flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: elongated
Fruit length: less than .5 inch
Fruit cover: dry or hard
Fruit color: unknown
Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not applicable
Current year stem/twig color: reddish
Current year stem/twig thickness: thick

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in full sun
Soil tolerances: acidic; alkaline; sand;
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: plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more
Invasive potential: aggressive, spreading plant
Pest resistance: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

Use and Management

Sea Purslane is best when planted as a ground cover in a sandy, well drained soil in the full sun. Virtually no irrigation or fertilizer is needed once the plant is established in the landscape. In many ways it defines a low maintenance plant. It is resistant to the wind and salty air common along the coast. It is not suited for planting in the partial shade. It could be located in a sunny spot inland in a sandy soil provided the soil drains well.

Pests and Diseases

No problems are associated with this plant if it is located in the full sun in a well drained soil.