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

Fact Sheet FPS-554
October, 1999

Spartina bakeri[1]

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Introduction

Sand Cordgrass is a robust ornamental grass that can form clumps that are 18 to 20 feet in diameter (Fig. 1). This grass may grow from 3 to 4 feet tall, and its fine textured, wiry leaves form a fountain spray pattern. The upper surfaces of the leaves are dark green, but the lower surfaces are light green in color. The obscure flowers of this plant may occur in the early spring but are relatively scarce. The seed-heads of this grass are generally 2 to 8 inches long, but the plant reproduces mainly by rhizomes.

General Information

Scientific name: *Spartina bakeri*
Pronunciation: spar-TYE-nuh BAY-ker-rye
Common name(s): Marsh Grass, Sand Cordgrass
Family: *Gramineae*
Plant type: herbaceous; ornamental grass
USDA hardiness zones: 8B through 11 (Fig. 2)
Planting month for zone 8: year round
Planting month for zone 9: year round
Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round
Origin: native to Florida
Uses: reclamation plant; accent; border; edging; mass planting
Availablity: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

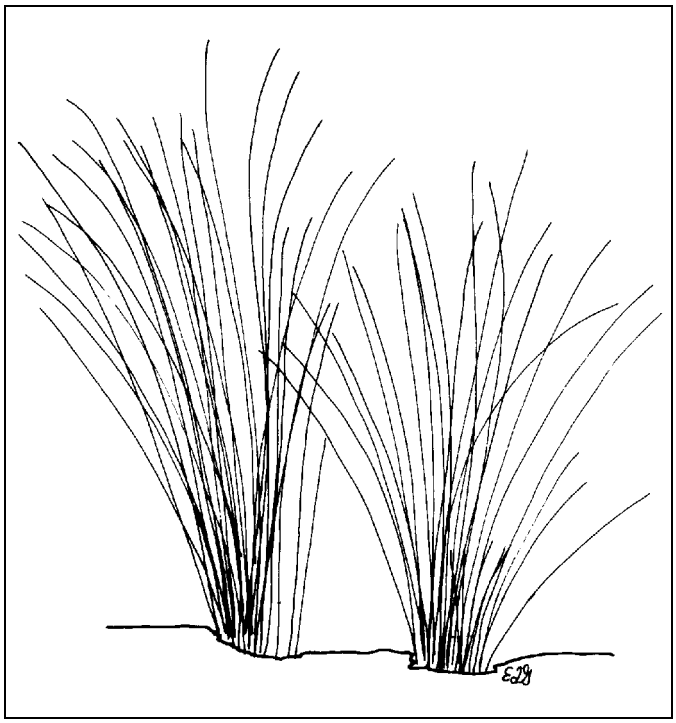

Figure 1. Marsh Grass.

Description

Height: 3 to 4 feet
Spread: 3 to 5 feet

Plant habit: vase shape
Plant density: moderate
Growth rate: moderate
Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

1. This document is Fact Sheet FPS-554, 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: linear
Leaf venation: parallel
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaf blade length: more than 36 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: brown or tan
Fall characteristic: showy

Flower

Flower color: brown
Flower characteristic: fall flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: unknown
Fruit length: unknown
Fruit cover: unknown
Fruit color: unknown
Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

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

Culture

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

Other

Roots: not applicable
Winter interest: plant has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers

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

Sand Cordgrass can be used as an accent or border and is striking when planted in mass. Space plants about 3 to 4 feet apart to form a mass of foliage several years after planting. It is a good native grass for use on the shorelines of ponds and streams and is exquisite when back-lit by the sun. It also is suited for planting in and around water retention and detention areas because of their tolerance to wet soil.

Grow Sand Cordgrass in full sun or light shade on medium dry to wet soils. This plant can tolerate periodic flooding during the growing season and will grow well on the margins of sand ponds and fresh water marshes. Spartina patens and Spartina alterniflora are tolerant of saline water and often grow in coastal saltwater mashes.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.