

Establishment for Field Production

American beachgrass production fields are established with vegetative divisions. Planting units should consist of single stems, sometimes referred to as culms. Each culm should be dormant, firm and have at least one healthy growing node. Planting can be accomplished by the use of a vegetable transplanter. The leaves and roots are trimmed to lengths that meet the needs of the transplanter.

For more information, see publication TN-NJPMC-05-14 *Establishing Production Fields of 'Cape' American Beachgrass*, available online in 2006 at <http://www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov/plants.html>

Establishment for Conservation Use

Culms are usually planted on dunes by hand in early spring before breaking dormancy. A step-by-step photo guide to planting beachgrass is available on the Plant Materials national website:

<http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/pubs/NJPMCAR4697.pdf>

Locate and Obtain Plant Material

The Cape May PMC selects and propagates plant cultivars called releases that are best-suited for the East coast, and tests them in field trials. Breeder or foundation material of these plants is made available to the public through commercial nurseries. A list of plant and seed vendors is available from the PMC or online at:

<http://www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov/plants.html>

February 2006

Opportunities to Participate at Cape May PMC

**NRCS Field Offices, District Employees,
Partners and Volunteers**
We need your help!

The Cape May PMC serves a nine-state area extending from Massachusetts to North Carolina. The plant developmental process used by the Cape May PMC relies heavily on the cooperation of our conservation partners to locate native plant stands; collect materials and ship them to Cape May; locate suitable plant testing sites; record plant performance data; and publish new scientific findings. Call the Cape May PMC for more details about how you can help.

Tours Available

Visitors are always welcome at the PMC. The center is open Monday through Friday. Please call the PMC to schedule your visit.

USDA NRCS Plant Materials Center
1536 Route Nine North
Cape May Court House NJ 08210
Tele: (609) 465-5901
Fax: (609) 465-9284

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United States Department of Agriculture
 **NRCS** Natural Resources
Conservation Service
Cape May Plant Materials Center (PMC)



'Cape'
American Beachgrass
Ammophila breviligulata Fern.

Cape May PMC products
Helping People Help the Land
with better plants and science

American beachgrass



Scientific Name:

Ammophila breviligulata Fern.

Alternate Common Name:

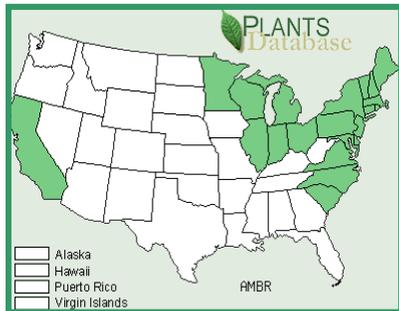
American beachgrass

Description:

American beachgrass is a leafy, native bunch grass that spreads by rhizomes with average heights of 2'-3'. The seed heads are a spike-like panicle, up to 10" long and appear in late July-August. Its vigorous growth enables it to withstand heavy deposits of sand.

Plant Distribution:

Though American beachgrass naturally occurs in the states shaded on this map, 'Cape' is



recommended for use from Massachusetts to northern North Carolina. Consult your local resources for invasive status.

Beachgrass Role in Coastal Systems

America's incredibly beautiful and geographically diverse coastline attracts millions of tourists each year. The sand dune systems found along these shores are an inherent part of the tourist "experience."

In addition to supporting an industry vital to the region, these dunes provide habitat for many species of wildlife. During hurricanes and storms, sand dunes protect this habitat, our land, property and, at times, our very lives.

Sand dunes erode by design as they absorb storm energies. In the eastern United States 'Cape' American beachgrass is widely used to stabilize dunes that protect our communities. When properly used and applied, 'Cape' increases the protective values of sand dunes that serve and protect the American public and the needs of our diverse wildlife species.

Plant Selection Process

NRCS conducts its plant development activities in keeping with the philosophy of Dr. Franklin J. Crider, first head of the Plant Materials Section, that "in most cases, nature has evolved a plant for almost every growing condition."

In developing 'Cape' American beachgrass, NRCS used the Comparative Observation Evaluation process. Many populations of the same species were planted side by side in evaluation plots. Populations were observed and compared to each other. The population with promising traits and characteristics was isolated, increased, tested in multiple environments and released to the commercial nursery industry.

Selection Attributes

'Cape' American beachgrass has a wide leaf surface area and a desirable number of stems per plant. These naturally occurring characteristics combine to provide superior sand-trapping efficiencies.

Origin

This material originated from naturally occurring sand dune systems in Cape Cod, Massachusetts. PMC staff released this naturally occurring geno-type under the cultivar name of 'Cape' in recognition of its origin from Cape Cod.

Adaptation

American beachgrass grows best in the frontal dune or pioneer zone where sand is actively accumulating.

Application and Uses

- ◆ Stabilizing wind blown sand
- ◆ Creating new dune systems
- ◆ Stabilizing beach replenishment projects
- ◆ "Jump starting" natural succession on critical areas, gravel mines, mining spoil, coal gob piles, and many sites with hot/dry/infertile soils

Finding plants that meet conservation needs continues to be the focus of the Plant Materials Program nationwide.

<http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov>