

Establishment for Field Production

The seed of coastal little bluestem is similar to the seed of upland geno-types of *Schizachyrium scoparium*.

Seeding rates for production fields with rows on 36" center should equal 1.7 PLS per acre or 30 seeds per linear foot of row. Fields with rows on 42" centers should use 1.42 PLS per acre.

Consult PLANTS database for Planting Guides and Plant Fact Sheets for this species.

Establishment for Conservation Use

Dune Crest Germplasm is intended for use in sand dunes to diversify the plant community and for Conservation Practice Code 342 in coastal ecotones. Like most dune adapted species, it will survive on droughty, hot and infertile sites such as sand and gravel mines.

For additional information consult the PLANTS data base:<http://plants.nrcs.usda.gov>

Locate and Obtain Plant Material

The Cape May PMC propagates, tests and selects plants best-suited for conservation practices in the eastern U.S. Coastal Plain area. The plants are then released to the commercial nursery industry who make certified material available to the public. A list of plant and seed vendors is available from the PMC or online at:

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

Opportunities to Participate

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.

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1536 Route Nine North
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Cape May Plant Materials Center (PMC)



Dune Crest Germplasm
Coastal Little Bluestem
Source Identified Germplasm

Schizachyrium littorale (Nash)
Bickn.

A Mid-Atlantic Ecotype

*Cape May PMC products are
helping people help the land
through better plants and science*

Coastal Little Bluestem



Hitchcock, A.S. (rev. A. Chase). 1950.

Scientific Name:

Schizachyrium littorale (Nash) Bickn.

Common Name:

Coastal Little Bluestem

Description:

Coastal little bluestem is a short (1-2 foot) bunch grass with coarse blue-green stems and basal leaves which often appear purplish. It is very similar to the inland little bluestem, but can be distinguished by the bent stems at the base; little bluestem stems are erect. Leaves are smooth, but frequently are covered with hair at the base next to the sheath. Leaves tend to fold with maturity. Seed head clusters are about three inches long and consist of a number of short, silvery hairs (awns) when the seeds are ripe. In the late summer to early fall a low sun slanting across the seed heads of this grass give the plant a frosty appearance.

Plant Distribution:

Prior to using any plant material determine its local invasive status.



Coastal Systems and Coastal Little Bluestem

America's 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 Dune Crest Germplasm can be used in conjunction with other plants to stabilize sand dunes that protect our communities. When properly used, Dune Crest Germplasm increases the protective value of sand dunes while serving and protecting the American public.

Plant Selection Process

Coastal little bluestem has become less prominent in many coastal sand dune locations due to selective grazing by livestock, human activity, developmental pressures and sand dune loss stemming from coastal storm surges.

In the development of Dune Crest Germplasm, PMC staff searched for healthy, robust stands of this species throughout the mid-Atlantic. When found, they were collected and included in assembly.

Dune Crest Germplasm has not been subjected to selection and represents truly raw, undeveloped native material.

Photo of PMC Production Field



Origin

Dune Crest Germplasm is a composite release originating from 6 collection sites. These sites include: Sea Bright, Barnegat Light, Brigantine, Avalon and Cape in May New Jersey and Delaware State Park near Dewey Beach in Delaware.

Adaptation

Coastal little bluestem occurs almost exclusively along oceanic coastlines and sand dunes. It normally occupies secondary dune eco-tones where sand accretion and erosion is minimal.

Application and Uses

- ◆ Diversifying sand dune plant communities
- ◆ Beach replenishment projects
- ◆ Critical Area Stabilization within coastal zone areas.