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Native Plants of Coastal Louisiana



Introduction:

The purpose of this guide is to help users identify common native plants of Louisiana's Coastal Zone. This guide does not include all plants found on our barrier islands, along our beaches or within our coastal marshes. Rather this guide provides a cursory introduction to common native species that are adapted for life along our dynamic coast. These plants provide valuable habitat to coastal and estuarine communities and play a critical role in shoreline stabilization.

This guide and companion course have been developed and designed to serve as a tool for local communities. By equipping local community members with the knowledge and understanding of our coastal plant communities that may have been affected by the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. This effort is the first in a series of initiatives aimed at building a collaborative, open-access, community-driven resilience campaign that will offer citizens a means to take an active role in the recovery of the Gulf coastline.

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Partner Contacts:

Bayou Land Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Council

Bayou Land Resource Conservation & Development Council (Bayou Land RC&D) (www.bayoulandrcd.org) is an all volunteer member based 501 (c) (3) non-profit that focuses on natural resource conservation and community development with the goal of building resilient communities in healthy environments in eight southeast Louisiana Parishes (Jefferson, Orleans, St. Charles, St. Bernard, Plaquemines, Lafourche, Terrebonne, and St. John the Baptist).

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USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

NRCS works with landowners through conservation planning and assistance to benefit the soil, water, air, plants, and animals for productive lands and healthy ecosystems. Working at the local level—in field offices at USDA Service Centers in nearly every county in the Nation—NRCS employees’ understanding of local resource concerns and challenges result in conservation solutions that last. Seventy percent of the land in the United States is privately owned, making stewardship by private landowners absolutely critical to the health of our nation’s environment.

NRCS succeeds through partnerships, working closely with individual farmers and ranchers, landowners, local conservation districts, government agencies, Tribes, Earth Team volunteers and many other people and groups that care about the quality of America’s natural resources.

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NRCS Plant Materials Program:

The purpose of the program is to provide native plants and plant related technology that can help solve natural resource problems. Beneficial uses for which plant material may be developed include coastal shoreline and dune stabilization, biomass production, carbon sequestration, erosion reduction, wetland restoration, water quality improvement, stream bank and riparian area protection, and other special conservation treatment needs.

Three plant materials centers (Golden Meadow, East Texas, and Jamie L. Whitten) provide assistance to the state of Louisiana. Each center serves an area within the state of Louisiana that represents unique land resource areas.

To learn more about the Plant Materials Program nationwide, visit the National Plant Materials Program website <http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov>.

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Coastal Plants of Louisiana

Beach: (wrack line to Foredune)

- MARSHHAY CORDGRASS (*Spartina patens* (Ait.) Muhl.)
- SEA BLIGHT (*Suaeda linearis* (Ell.) Moq.)
- GREG'S AMARANTH (*Amaranthus greggii*)
- CAMPHOR DAISY (*Rayjacksonia phyllocephala*)
- SEASIDE PURSLANE (*Sesuvium portulacastrum*)
- AMERICAN SEA ROCKET (*Cakile endentula*)
- GULF SEA ROCKET (*Cakile geniculate*)
- COASTAL SEA ROCKET (*Cakile lanceolata*)

Dune:

- BITTER PANICUM (*Panicum amarum* Ell.)
- MARSHHAY CORDGRASS (*Spartina patens* (Ait.) Muhl.)
- COASTAL DROPSEED (*Sporobolus virginicus* (L.) Kunth)
- SEA OATS (*Uniola paniculata*)
- RAILROAD VINE (*Ipomea pes caprae*)
- BEACH MORNING-GLORY (*Ipomea imperati*)
- BEACH CROTON (*Croton punctatus* Jacq.)

Backdune to Barrier Flat:

- MARSHHAY CORDGRASS (*Spartina patens* (Ait.) Muhl.)
- BITTER PANICUM (*Panicum amarum* Ell.)
- ROSEAU CANE (*Phragmites australis* (Cav.) Trin ex Steud)
- LEAFYTHREE-SQUARE (*Schoenoplectus robustus* (Pursh) M. T. Strong)
- GULF BLUESTEM (*Schizachyrium maritimum* (Chapman) Nash)
- SALTMARSH FIMBRISTYLIS (*Fimbristylis castenea* (Michx.) Vahl)
- SEASIDE GOLDENROD (*Solidago sempervirens*)
- GULF CORDGRASS (*Spartina spartinae* (Trin.) merr. ex Hitchc.)

Back Bay Flat to Intertidal:

- MARSHHAY CORDGRASS (*Spartina patens* (Ait.) Muhl.)
- SMOOTH CORDGRASS (*Spartina alterniflora*)
- SALTGRASS (*Distichlis spicata* (L.) Green)
- SEASHORE PASPALUM (*Paspalum vaginatum*)
- BLACK MANGROVE (*Avicennia germans* (L.) L.)
- BLACK RUSH (*Juncus roemerianus* Scheele)
- SALTWART (*Batis maritima* L)



Marshhay Cordgrass



Marshhay Cordgrass

Marshhay Cordgrass

Spartina patens (Aiton) Muhl.

Colloquial Names: Wiregrass, Salt Meadow Cordgrass, Paille a Chat Tigre

Family: Poaceae

Growth Habit: Grass (Graminoid)

Duration: Perennial

Wetland Indicator Status: FACW

Height: Erect to 4 ft. (1.2 m)

Habitat:

- Grows in all marsh types but dominant in intermediate and brackish marshes
- Sandy beaches of coastal shores and barrier islands, low dunes to back bay marsh
- Tidal flats, marsh ridge and cheniere, and high salt marsh borders

Plant Characteristics:

- Dark green wirelike, hollow, stiff stems emerging from rhizomes
- Leaf blades are long and slender (linear) less than 0.5 inches wide and up to 1.5 inches long
- Leaf blades shiny dark green on upper surface and rough with prominent veins on the lower surface
- Leaves are drooping and wiry in appearance
- Long slender pale whitish to reddish rhizomes

Reproduction: Sexual (flowering June to October), and asexual from rhizomes

Beach: (wrack line to Fore dune)



Sea Blight

Sea Blight



Sea Blight

Sea Blight

Suaeda linearis (Ell.) Moq.

Colloquial Name: Annual Seepweed

Growth Habit: Subshrub

Plant Characteristics:

- Alternately arranged, fleshy linear leaves (up to 2 inches long)
- Upper leaves reduced in size
- Small green flowers on terminal spike

Habitat:

- Beaches
- Foredunes

Duration: Annual

Height: up to 32 inches

Reproduction: Flowers August to November

Beach: (wrack line to Foredune)

Greg's Amaranth



Greg's Amaranth

Greg's Amaranth

Greg's Amaranth

Amaranthus Greggii

Colloquial Name: Coastal Pigweed

Growth Habit: Forb/Herb

Plant Characteristics:

- Bright green, shrubby, pioneer herb
- Somewhat rounded leaves with thick veins beneath
- Male and female flowers are on separate plants and can be found on long spikes

Habitat: Backshore near coastal dunes, windward slopes of dunes

Duration: Annual

Height: 1 to 3 ft.

Beach: (wrack line to Foredune)



Camphor
Daisy



Camphor
Daisy

Camphor Daisy

Rayjacksonia phyllocephala

Colloquial Name: none

Growth Habit: Forb/Herb

Plant Characteristics: Yellow flowers bloom

Habitat:

Camphor Daisy grows on:

- Beaches
- Foredunes

Duration: Annual

Height: 1 to 3 ft. tall

Reproduction: Vegetative (from container grown or bare root plant material)

Beach: (wrack line to Foredune)



Seaside Purslane



Seaside Purslane



Seaside Purslane

Sesuvium portulacastrum

Colloquial Name: Sea Purslane, Sea Pickle

Growth Habit: Herb; Vine

Plant Characteristics:

- Smooth, fleshy, glossy green leaves that are linear
- Stems trailing, much-branched, sometimes forming patches 2 yards across
- Seeds are black, smooth and shiny
- Flowers are pink or purple

Habitat:

Seaside Purslane grows on:

- Beaches
- Dunes
- Salt marshes edges

Duration: Perennial

Height: 0 to 1 ft.

Reproduction: Vegetative (from container grown or bare root plant material)

Beach: (wrack line to Foredune)

Sea Rocket



Sea Rocket Sea Rocket

Sea Rocket *Cakile sp. (Ca-ki-le)*

Four species found to occur in Louisiana:

Gulf Coast Sea Rocket

Cakile constricta Rodman

- Naturally occurring coast wide in Louisiana

American Sea Rocket

Cakile edentula (Bigelow) Hook.

- Only reported in Plaquemines Parish

Gulf Sea Rocket

Cakile geniculata (B.L. Rob.) Millsp.

- Naturally occurring coast wide in Louisiana

Coastal Sea Rocket

Cakile lanceolata (Willd.) O.E. Schulz

- Reported in St. Bernard, Plaquemines, St. Mary, and Cameron Parishes

Colloquial Names: Wild Peppergrass, Sea Kale

Growth Habit: succulent forb

Plant Characteristics:

- Low succulent (fleshy)
- Lobed leaves
- Seed pods are rocket shaped
- Flowers are white to purple; flowers July to September

Habitat:

American Sea Rocket grows on:

- Beaches
- Wrack line (high tide) to foredunes
- Salt marshes edges

Duration: Perennial

Height: 4 inches to 20 inches tall

Reproduction: Seeds are dispersed through the fruits that break into segments and are able to travel distances in the water before washing ashore, breaking open, and generating new growth.

Beach: (wrack line to Foredune)



Bitter Panicum



Bitter Panicum



Bitter Panicum

Panicum amarum Ell.

Colloquial Name: Panic Grass, Bitter Panic Grass, Bitter Beach Grass, Coastal Panic Grass

Habit:

Bitter Panicum grows on:

- Coastal dunes
- Coastal beaches
- Barrier islands

Plant Characteristics:

- Leaves reach 20 inches long, 1/2 inch wide, smooth, bluish in color
- Rhizomes root at nodes

Duration: Warm season perennial

Height: 4 to 8 feet

Reproduction: Vegetative from container grown or bare root plant material

Propagation/Establishment:

- Propagation for container production is accomplished by plant divisions or cuttings.
- Established in the fall with rooted cuttings and planted in late winter or early spring.
- Field plantings are established by planting with 2 to 5 feet between plants.
- Place plants 8 to 10 inches deep or deeper in moist soil. Bury un-rooted stems end to end in trenches 4 to 6 inches deep and 2 to 3 feet apart leaving the top 6 to 10 inches of the stem exposed.
- Un-rooted cuttings can also be planted 3 per hole.

Dune



Marshhay Cordgrass



Marshhay Cordgrass

Marshhay Cordgrass

Spartina patens (Aiton) Muhl.

Colloquial Names: Wiregrass, Salt Meadow Cordgrass, Paille a Chat Tigre

Family: Poaceae

Growth Habit: Grass (Graminoid)

Duration: Perennial

Wetland Indicator Status: FACW

Height: Erect to 4 ft. (1.2 m)

Habitat:

- Grows in all marsh types but dominant in intermediate and brackish marshes
- Sandy beaches of coastal shores and barrier islands, low dunes to back bay marsh
- Tidal flats, marsh ridge and cheniere, and high salt marsh borders

Plant Characteristics:

- Dark green wirelike, hollow, stiff stems emerging from rhizomes
- Leaf blades are long and slender (linear) less than 0.5 inches wide and up to 1.5 inches long
- Leaf blades shiny dark green on upper surface and rough with prominent veins on the lower surface
- Leaves are drooping and wiry in appearance
- Long slender pale whitish to reddish rhizomes

Reproduction: Sexual (flowering June to October), and asexual from rhizomes

Dune

Coastal Dropseed



Coastal Dropseed

Coastal Dropseed

Sporobolus virginicus (L.) Kunth

Colloquial Names: Seashore Dropseed

Growth Habit: low growing, grass

Plant Characteristics:

- Leaves 1 to 4 inches long
- Salt crystals commonly seen on leaves and stems
- Roots can grow 18" deep
- Flowers dense and spike-like
- Drought tolerant

Habitat:

Coastal dropseed grows on:

- Dune ridges and dune slopes

Duration: Perennial

Height: 4 inches to 8 inches tall

Reproduction: low seed viability

Propagation/Establishment: Propagation is by vegetative rhizomatous slips. Cut rhizomatous slips 3 to 4" long and plant in sterile, well drained medium. Place propagules under 50% shade and keep medium moist. After 2 months, place propagules in full sunlight to harden off. Propagules should be ready to plant within 3 to 4 months.



Sea Oats



Sea Oats

Uniola paniculata

Growth Habit: Grass (C-4)

Plant Characteristics:

- Culms erect
- Seed heads become a yellow-brown, straw color in late summer and into the fall.
- Inflorescence is a long panicle 8 to 15 cm long with flat yellowish spikelets holding 10 to 20 flowers

Habitat:

Sea oats grow on:

- Foredunes
- Dune ridges and dune slopes

Duration: Warm season semitropical perennial

Height: 1-2 meters tall

Reproduction: Sea oats is a poor seed producer. Although many seeds are not viable, plants will produce a significant number of seeds. For planting purposes, sea oats are established vegetatively.

Propagation/Establishment: Sea oats are generally established using vegetative propagules. Freshly dug bareroot plant divisions can be used effectively.

Railroad Vine



Railroad Vine



Railroad Vine

Ipomea pes-caprae

Colloquial Names: Beach Morning Glory,
Bay Hops

Growth Habit: Trailing vine

Plant Characteristics:

- Leaf blades measuring approximately 1.2 – 5.5 inches in length
- Runners are succulent and have a milky colored sap
- Taproots are long and deep (>1 meter deep)
- Flowers 1.2 – 5.5 inches in diameter funnel-shaped.
- Flower color ranges from pink to red-purple or violet, darker at the inside base of each flower

Habitat:

Railroad vine grows on:

- Just above the high tide line along coastal beaches
- Backdune
- Barrier flats

Duration: Perennial

Height: Branches may reach 10 m (~33 feet) in length.

Reproduction: Railroad vine grows vegetatively by rooting from stem cuttings. It also reproduces by seed. Flowers of railroad vine are short-lived: blooming at sunrise, closing by mid-afternoon, and dropping off the plant the following day. Peak flower production depends on location. Louisiana plants peak July through August.

Propagation/Establishment: Seeds do not require a dormant period before sprouting. However, the seed coat is impermeable to water and must first be abraded by sand before the seeds will germinate.

Dune



Beach Morning Glory



Beach Morning Glory

Ipomea imperati

Colloquial Names: None

Growth Habit: Low-growing, vine

Plant Characteristics:

- Leaves leathery, narrow irregularly lobed & often fiddle-shaped.
- Flowers white, tubular bell-shaped with yellow centers.
- Leaves and flowers lie directly on the sand and extend as much as 90 ft, in length
- Vine trails across beach & roots emerge at numerous nodes along the stem anchoring the plant to the beach.

Habitat:

Beach morning glory grows on:

- Coastal flats
- Dunes
- The windward and leeward slopes of dunes

Duration: Perennial

Height: creeps along beach up to 90 ft. in length

Reproduction: Vegetative

Propagation/Establishment: Propagation is by vegetative rhizomatous slips. Cut rhizomatous slips 3 to 4' long and plant in sterile, well drained medium. Place propagules under 50% shade and keep medium moist. After 2 months, place propagules in full sunlight to harden off. Propagules should be ready to plant within 3 to 4 months.



Beach Croton



Beach Croton

Beach Croton

Croton punctatus Jacq.

Colloquial Names: Gulf Croton, Beach Tea, Silverleaf Croton

Growth Habit: Semi-woody subshrub

Plant Characteristics:

- Leaves round to oval-shaped with slightly wider base.
- Orange colored pubescence or downy hairs on plants.
- 3 seeds per capsule.

Habitat:

Beach Croton grows on:

- Backshore near dunes or dune ridges
- Windward and leeward slopes of dunes
- Loose dry sands along the coast

Duration: Perennial

Height: 1 to 3 ft. tall

Reproduction: Seed

Dune



Marshhay Cordgrass



Marshhay Cordgrass

Marshhay Cordgrass

Spartina patens (Aiton) Muhl.

Colloquial Names: Wiregrass, Salt Meadow Cordgrass, Paille a Chat Tigre

Family: Poaceae

Growth Habit: Grass (Graminoid)

Duration: Perennial

Wetland Indicator Status: FACW

Height: Erect to 4 ft. (1.2 m)

Habitat:

- Grows in all marsh types but dominant in intermediate and brackish marshes
- Sandy beaches of coastal shores and barrier islands, low dunes to back bay marsh
- Tidal flats, marsh ridge and cheniere, and high salt marsh borders

Plant Characteristics:

- Dark green wirelike, hollow, stiff stems emerging from rhizomes
- Leaf blades are long and slender (linear) less than 0.5 inches wide and up to 1.5 inches long
- Leaf blades shiny dark green on upper surface and rough with prominent veins on the lower surface
- Leaves are drooping and wiry in appearance
- Long slender pale whitish to reddish rhizomes

Reproduction: Sexual (flowering June to October), and asexual from rhizomes

Backdune to Barrier Flat



Bitter Panicum



Bitter Panicum



Bitter Panicum

Panicum amarum Ell.

Colloquial Name: Panic Grass, Bitter Panic Grass, Bitter Beach Grass, Coastal Panic Grass

Habit:

Bitter Panicum grows on:

- Coastal dunes
- Coastal beaches
- Barrier islands

Plant Characteristics:

- Leaves reach 20 inches long, 1/2 inch wide, smooth, bluish in color
- Rhizomes root at nodes

Duration: Warm season perennial

Height: 4 to 8 feet

Reproduction: Vegetative from container grown or bare root plant material

Propagation/Establishment:

- Propagation for container production is accomplished by plant divisions or cuttings
- Established in the fall with rooted cuttings and planted in late winter or early spring
- Field plantings are established by planting with 2 to 5 feet between plants
- Place plants 8 to 10 inches deep or deeper in moist soil. Bury un-rooted stems end to end in trenches 4 to 6 inches deep and 2 to 3 feet apart leaving the top 6 to 10 inches of the stem exposed
- Un-rooted cuttings can also be planted 3 per hole

Backdune to Barrier Flat



Roseau Cane



Roseau Cane

Phragmites australis (Cav.) Trin. ex Steud

Colloquial Names: Common Reed, Giant Reed, Giant Reedgrass, Roseau, Yellow Cane, Cane

Growth Habit: Warm season grass

Plant Characteristics:

- Leaf blade is flat & smooth; ½ to 2 inches wide and 6 to 18 inches long.
- Seed head is an open panicle with a purplish or tawny and flag-like.
- Roseau cane is easily identified by its height—it is the tallest grass in southern marshes and swamps.

Habitat:

Roseau cane grows on:

- Marshes
- Swamps
- Banks of bayous; banks, lakes and streams, and at marsh edges

Duration: Perennial

Height: 6 to 12 ft. tall

Reproduction: New shoots grow from buds at nodes of old, stems, stolons, and rhizomes. *Phragmites* reproduces through wind dispersal and vigorous vegetative reproduction through rhizomes. It often forms dense stands.

Propagation/Establishment: Flowering and seed set occur between July and September, resulting in a large feathery inflorescence, purple hued turning to tan.



Leafy Three-square

Leafy Three-square

Schoenoplectus robustus (Pursh) M.T. Strong

Colloquial Names: Three-square, Salt Marsh Bulrush, Coco Doux, Paille d'Oie (French)

Family: Cyperaceae

Growth Habit: Graminoid (grass like)

Duration: Perennial

Wetland Indicator Status: OBL

Height: Unbranched herb to 3 ft. (0.9 m)

Plant Characteristics:

- Erect grass like herb with stout triangular stems.
- Several elongate linear grass like leaves, 1/2 inch wide tapering to a point.
- Inflorescence (seedhead) is a near terminal cluster of inconspicuous flowers forming a dark brown achene surrounded by 2-4 elongated, erect, leaf-like bracts.

Habitat

- Intermediate to brackish, and some saline marsh, salinity ranging from 3.5 to 10 ppt.
- Commonly grows in association with *Spartina patens* (marshhay cordgrass).
- Occurring on both organic and mineral soils subject to tidal influence.

Reproduction: Sexual (flowering mid-summer) and asexual by extensive rhizomes and tubers.



Gulf Bluestem



Gulf Bluestem

Schizachyrium maritimum (Chapm.) Nash

Colloquial Names: Seacoast Bluestem

Family: Poaceae

Wetland Indicator Status: FAC+

Duration: Perennial

Height: 35 cm

Plant Characteristics: Foliage has a distinctive bluish-green appearance turning bronze in the fall. Stems are flattened and branching at the lower base. Mature stems often become decumbent (growing laterally on the ground and turning upward). Stem nodes will root as they become covered by sand.

Habitat: Found to naturally occur on coastal and offshore islands of the Florida panhandle west to Louisiana. This plant is restricted to shifting coastal sand dunes. It can generally be found growing in back of the primary dune.

Reproduction: Sexually and asexually via short rhizomes or rooting of stem nodes.

Propagation: Plants can be produced by seed or vegetatively by plant division and stem cuttings (nodal sections).

Saltmarsh Fimbristylis



Saltmarsh Fimbristylis Saltmarsh Fimbristylis

Saltmarsh Fimbristylis

Fimbristylis castenea (Michx.) Vahl)

Colloquial Name: Marsh Fimbry

Growth Habit: Grass

Duration: Perennial

Height: to 4 ft. tall

Plant Characteristics:

- Leaves basal up to 20 inches long, less than .07 inches (2mm) wide
- Shiny brown flowers grow from end of stem in ovoid spikelet's

Habitat:

Saltmarsh fimbristylis grows on:

- Backdune
- Marsh edges

Seaside Goldenrod



Seaside Goldenrod

Solidago sempervirens

Colloquial Names: None

Growth Habit: Herb/forb

Plant Characteristics:

- Fleshy, waxy leaves
- Flowerheads 1/4 to 3/8 inch high, in clusters 2 to 5 inches across
- Tight clump of narrow, evergreen leaves topped by leafy, erect or arching, 2 to 8 ft. stalks.
- Flowers are deep yellow and the leaves are somewhat succulent.

Habitat:

Seaside goldenrod grows on:

- Dunes
- Backdunes
- Salt marshes

Duration: Perennial

Height: 3 to 5 ft. tall

Reproduction: Vegetation, Seed

Propagation/Establishment: The only developed method of propagation is by rootstalk or propagule division. Transplants should be made in late winter to early spring. Seeding has potential, but the technique has not been fully developed.

Backdune to Barrier Flat



Gulf Cordgrass



Gulf Cordgrass

Spartina spartinae (Trin.) Merr. ex Hitchc.

Colloquial Names: Marsh Bunchgrass, Sacahuista.

Family: Poaceae

Growth Habit: Grass (Graminoid)

Duration: Perennial

Wetland Indicator Status: FACW

Height: 2-4 ft. (0.6-1.2 m)

Habitat:

- Slightly elevated intermediate to saline marsh
- Intermittently flooded and non-tidal marshes
- Prospers on well drained clay to sandy soils
- Typically can be found growing on back beach marshes and bay shores
- Moderate salinity range from 0-18 ppt.

Plant Characteristics:

- Often found growing in dense colonies
- Stems (culms) are stiff, erect, unbranched, smooth
- Leaves are long, slender, ascending, and sharply pointed.
- Seedhead is a long slender panicle terminal located on the stem.

Propagation: Sexual (flowering spring and summer)



Marshhay Cordgrass



Marshhay Cordgrass

Marshhay Cordgrass

Spartina patens (Aiton) Muhl.

Colloquial Names: Wiregrass, Salt Meadow Cordgrass, Paille a Chat Tigre

Family: Poaceae

Growth Habit: Grass (Graminoid)

Duration: Perennial

Wetland Indicator Status: FACW

Height: Erect to 4 ft. (1.2 m)

Habitat:

- Grows in all marsh types but dominant in intermediate and brackish marshes
- Sandy beaches of coastal shores and barrier islands, low dunes to back bay marsh
- Tidal flats, marsh ridge and cheniere, and high salt marsh borders

Plant Characteristics:

- Dark green wirelike, hollow, stiff stems emerging from rhizomes
- Leaf blades are long and slender (linear) less than 0.5 inches wide and up to 1.5 inches long
- Leaf blades shiny dark green on upper surface and rough with prominent veins on the lower surface
- Leaves are drooping and wiry in appearance
- Long slender pale whitish to reddish rhizomes

Reproduction: Sexual (flowering June to October), and asexual from rhizomes

Back Bay Flat to Intertidal



Smooth Cordgrass



Smooth Cordgrass

Smooth Cordgrass

Spartina alterniflora Loisel

Colloquial Names: Oystergrass, Salt Water Cordgrass, Paille des Huitres

Family: Poaceae

Growth Habit: Grass (Graminoid)

Duration: Perennial

Wetland Indicator Status: OBL

Height: Typically 2-4 ft. (0.6-1.2 m), tall form to 7 ft.

Plant Characteristics:

- Stout, erect, smooth, and round hollow stems emerge from rhizomes.
- Leaves are smooth, dark green (up to 16 inches long and ½ inch wide) tapering to a point.
- Inflorescence (seedhead) in a panicle with tight erect spikelets terminal on the stem.

Habitat:

- Forms dense colonies in coastal saline shorelines and intertidal flats.
- Occurs in intermediate and brackish marshes and dominate in saline marshes where salinities range above 10 ppt.
- Intertidal saline mineral soils

Reproduction: Sexual (Flowering mid-summer), asexual from rhizomes.

Back Bay Flat to Intertidal



Saltgrass



Saltgrass

Saltgrass

Distichlis spicata (L.) Greene

Colloquial Names: Seashore Saltgrass, Spike Grass, Alkali Grass, Paille Salee

Family: Poaceae

Growth Habit: Grass (Graminoid)

Duration: Perennial

Wetland Indicator Status: FACW

Height: 6 to 18 inches

Plant Characteristics:

- Leaves are short, two-ranked, sharply pointed, and erect (making the plant look spiky)
- Leaf sheaths overlap tightly on the stem, adding to a scaly appearance.
- Often found growing in dense colonies
- Salt crystals are usually present on the leaf blades in saline habitats
- Seedheads (inflorescence) are terminal on stems with distinctly different male and female panicles separated on plants.

Habitat:

- Brackish and saline marshes
- Backbay flats
- Forms dense colonies on slightly elevated shorelines and flats.

Reproduction: Sexual (unisexual flowers – dioecious) and asexually by rhizomes.

Back Bay Flat to Intertidal



Seashore Paspalum



Seashore Paspalum

Paspalum vaginatum Sw.

Colloquial Names: Jointgrass

Family: Poaceae

Wetland Indicator Status: OBL

Duration: Perennial

Height: 0.6 m, 24 inches

Plant Characteristics: Warm-season creeping perennial often forming dense mats from above ground stolons and below ground rhizomes on wet soils of coastal marshes and sandy back dune swales. Stems are erect with creeping stolons that often exhibit purplish-flattened internodes. Leaf blades are short and narrow, often flat or folded inward along the midrib. Seedheads are paired with spreading racemes each with two rows of seeds on one side of the seed stem.

Habitat: Fresh to brackish marshes on wet soils with salinities ranging from 0 to 3.5 ppt. Seashore paspalum often forms dense mats on mudflats, edge of marsh ponds, wet back dune swales of coastal beaches. and near shore islands.

Reproduction: Sexually (flowering), asexually from rhizomes and stolons.

Propagation: Plants can be produced by germinating seeds or vegetatively by plant division and rooting nodes from stolons.

Back Bay Flat to Intertidal



Black Mangrove



Black Mangrove

Black Mangrove

Avicennia germinans (L.) L.

Colloquial Names: Manglier (French)

Family: Verbenaceae

Growth Habit: Tree/Shrub

Duration: Perennial

Wetland Indicator Status: OBL

Height: Small to medium evergreen tree that can reach heights to 50 ft. (15 m). Plants at the most northern extent of its range, such as Louisiana ecotypes, exhibit heights to 9 ft. (2.7 m).

Plant Characteristics:

- Small flowers with white petals that bloom late spring to early summer.
- Leaves are opposite, elliptic, 1.5 to 2.5 inches long, dark green above and pale gray below.
- Bark is dark-brown to black.
- Deeply rooted with cylindrical pneumatophores.
- The fruit is one seeded, recalcitrant with a fleshy pale green pericarp maturing late spring to early winter.

Habitat:

- Brackish to saline coastal tidal areas in the eastern portion of the Louisiana Gulf Coast.
- Restricted to protected bays or tidal areas where salinities can exceed 10 ppt.
- Plants are sensitive to cold weather where severe freezes tend to limit its range and mortality can occur when temperatures remain below freezing for extended periods of time.

Reproduction: Sexual, mature seeds drop from the parent plant late spring to early winter. Seeds are distributed by tidal currents.

Back Bay Flat to Intertidal



Black Rush



Black Rush

Juncus roemerianus Scheele

Colloquial Names: Needle Rush, Needlegrass Rush, Black Needle Rush, Paille Chat Tigre

Family: Junaceae

Growth Habit: Graminoid (grass-like)

Duration: Perennial

Wetland Indicator Status: OBL

Height: 1.5 to 5 ft. (0.5 to 1.5 m)

Habitat:

- Occurs in all tidal marsh types but mainly found to occur in saline marshes.
- Most abundant in brackish and saline tidal marsh with salinities of 10 to 35 ppt.
- Often found growing in dense colonies to individual clump forming plants.

Plant Characteristics:

- Clump forming.
- Round, sharp pointed, erect, evergreen, dark green unbranched leaves growing from rhizomes.
- Leaves reddish at the base.
- Dense stands appearing blackish at a distance.

Reproduction: Sexual (flowering mid-summer).

Back Bay Flat to Intertidal



Saltwart



Saltwart

Batis maritima L.

Colloquial Names: Turtleweed, Pickleweed

Family: Bataceae

Growth Habit: Subshrub

Duration: Perennial

Wetland Indicator Status: OBL

Height: 1 to 2 feet

Plant Characteristics:

- Trailing stems that root at the nodes forming open mats from which erect flowering stems grow.
- Leaves are evergreen, opposite, small, succulent, smooth, yellowish to bright green, and rounded tapering to a sessile base.
- Flowers are tiny and white, occurring June through July.
- Fruits are yellow

Habitat:

- Highly saline tidal marshes.

Reproduction: Sexual (flowers unisexual – dioecious) or asexual (vegetative expansion from stolons and rhizomes).

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