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A Conservation Plant Released by The Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Jamie L. Whitten Plant Materials Center, Coffeerville, MS

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## 'HALIFAX' maidencane

### *Panicum hemitomon* Schult.

'Halifax' maidencane (*Panicum hemitomon* Schult.) is a cultivar released in 1974 by the USDA-NRCS Jamie L. Whitten Plant Materials Center (PMC), Coffeerville, MS, in cooperation with the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station.

#### Description

Halifax is a native warm-season perennial aquatic or semi-aquatic grass that grows 2-3 feet tall. It produces many sterile shoots with overlapping sheaths. Leaf blades range from ¼ to ½ inch wide and from 4 to 12 inches long. Panicle branches are erect, producing a spike-type seed head 6 to 12 inches long. None of the seed produced by Halifax has been found to be viable. It spreads from numerous, creeping rhizomes which allows it to form a dense vegetative mat. It will spread 24 to 30 inches per growing season.

#### Source

Halifax originated from a native stand of maidencane collected near Halifax, North Carolina. It was selected for its cold tolerance, rapid spread, and vigorous growth.

#### Conservation Uses

Halifax is recommended for shoreline erosion control on small lakes, ponds, irrigation reservoirs, channels, and stream banks. It is also planted in constructed wetlands.

#### Area of Adaptation and Use

The native range of maidencane is from New Jersey to south Florida, west to east and southeast Texas. It grows on mineral clays to floating organic soils. Site preferences include stream banks, shallow depressions, and marshes.

#### Establishment and Management for Conservation Plantings

Halifax is established from rhizomes planted in mid-April to mid-June. Adequate soil moisture is needed to ensure planting success. Rhizomes are planted in soft mud or in shallow furrows no more than two inches deep. Recommended spacing is one foot apart or less. If planted in furrows, cover the rhizome with soil. To ensure coverage and protection of newly constructed water impoundment levees, plant two or three rows of Halifax with one foot spacing between rows. The first row should be planted one foot above the normal water surface. At establishment, broadcast 5 pounds of 13-13-13 fertilizer or its equivalent per 100 feet of planted row. No fertilizer is needed if planted on catfish pond levees or in constructed wetlands because nutrients in the water will generally supply adequate fertility for plant growth.

#### Ecological Considerations

Maidencane is highly palatable to livestock and cannot withstand heavy grazing. It is also intolerant of excessive mowing. Maidencane is a rapid grower and can form dense stands that can out compete other species. Halifax may become invasive in moist soils and appropriate consideration should be used. Insects and diseases rarely cause problems. Control can be obtained by mowing, herbicides, and drainage. Halifax does not tolerate drought conditions.

#### Seed and Plant Production

Halifax maidencane is propagated vegetatively. Large-scale production requires planting around waterways where rhizome-harvesting equipment have access. Approximately 150,00 rhizomes can be harvested from a 100 square foot area.



*Halifax maidencane at the Jamie L. Whitten Plant Materials Center*

Commercial growers should contact the Jamie L. Whitten PMC for technical assistance in relation to plant production practices.

**Availability**

For seed or plant increase: Jamie L. Whitten PMC maintains breeder plant material of Halifax maidencane.

**For More Information**

Jamie L. Whitten Plant Materials Center, 2533 County Road 65, Coffeeville, MS, 38922, 662-675-2588, [www.nrcs.usda.gov/plant-materials/mspmc](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/plant-materials/mspmc).



**Citation**

Release brochure for ‘Halifax’ maidencane (*Panicum hemitomom* Schult.). 2023. USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Jamie L. Whitten Plant Materials Center, Coffeeville, Mississippi 38922.

For additional information about this and other plants, please contact your local USDA Service Center, NRCS field office, or Conservation District <<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>>, and visit the PLANTS Web site <<http://plants.usda.gov>> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <<http://www.plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>

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