



A Conservation Plant Released by The Natural Resources Conservation Service Brooksville Plant Materials Center, Brooksville, Florida

'FLAGEO'

saltmeadow cordgrass

Spartina patens (Aiton) Muhl.

Flageo saltmeadow cordgrass is a cultivar cooperatively released in 1990 by the Brooksville Plant Materials Center (PMC), Brooksville, FL, Jimmy Carter PMC, Americus, GA, and Fort Valley State University, Fort Valley, GA. Responsibilities for the maintenance and distribution of breeder and foundation stock were transferred to the Cape May PMC (Cape May Court House, NJ) in 2025.

Description

Flageo is a native, perennial, warm-season coastal grass. It produces erect stems reaching an average absolute height of 46 inches (Snell, 2024). Leaves range from flat to rolled inward toward their upper side. They have toothed edges and are about 0.125 inches wide. Flageo typically flowers from late summer to fall. However, very few viable seeds are produced. It primarily reproduces vegetatively and spreads from long rhizomes.

Source

Flageo was collected from a dune area near Maneto, NC. It was selected from a collection of 79 saltmeadow cordgrass accessions assembled from naturally occurring populations along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts from North Carolina to Texas. Flageo displayed a superior rate of spread relative to other accessions in comparative trials conducted at the Cape May PMC (Cape May Court House, NJ) (Alderson & Sharp, 1994).

Conservation Uses

Flageo was released primarily for erosion prevention. It helps stabilize low coastal sand dunes, wet interdune swales, and certain high salt marsh areas. Flageo can be planted for restoration of coastal areas devastated by Gulf and Atlantic hurricanes. In addition to coastal uses it has also been successfully used on inland sites. It has stabilized highly erosive areas on deep inland sands, recreational lake shorelines, and catfish pond levees.

Area of Adaptation and Use

Flageo was developed for use in the Gulf and Atlantic coastal regions and inland areas of the southeastern US. It is well adapted and performs well as far north as southern New Jersey. Flageo is salt tolerant and appropriate for use in saline environments.

Establishment and Management for Conservation Plantings

Establish vegetative material in late winter to early spring. Plant at the beginning of the rainy season in Florida. Plant potted or bare rooted stock with 5-10 stems each. Space plants 2-4 feet apart, depending on severity of the site. Plant rhizomes 4-6 inches deep into moist soils or deeper in sandy substrates. Fertilizer applications are not necessary but may encourage more rapid and complete establishment of plantings especially for critical area plantings. Some sites will need to be mowed periodically to reduce the height of the stand.

Sand dune sites must be crossed to reach the beach, therefore mechanical cross-over structures and fencing will need to be installed at selected points to provide access. This minimizes foot traffic and maintains the saltmeadow cordgrass stand. Some sites will require the implementation of an irrigation system to establish adequate root development. NRCS specialists can assist landowners with plans to properly manage this grass.



Flageo saltmeadow cordgrass study plot.

Ecological Considerations

No severe insect or disease problems have been observed in Flageo saltmeadow cordgrass. This plant may become weedy or invasive and may displace more desirable vegetation outside its intended area of use. Please consult with your local NRCS field office, Cooperative Extension Service office, or state natural resource or agriculture department regarding its status and use.

Plant Production

Saltmeadow cordgrass is most often vegetatively propagated and installed in nursery rows with a vegetable transplanter with an in row spacing of about 18 inches. Trimming the leaves and roots facilitates the process of planting with a transplanter. Establish plant production fields in a well prepared, weed free bed from early spring to mid-June using healthy bare root or containerized plant stock with live nodes or shoots and at least 3-5 stems. Later season plantings may benefit from regular irrigation if elongated dry conditions persist. A fertile irrigated field of 0.25 acres can produce thousands of new plants each year. Replicated Flageo study plots at the Cape May PMC produced an annual average of 9,394 lb/ac of biomass from 2021 to 2023 (Snell, 2024). Fertilizer applications made in the spring can help to optimize production. Contact your local agricultural extension for soil test analysis and fertilizer application recommendations prior to implementing a fertilization plan. A cool season prescribed burn is recommended to control certain weeds and produce a flush of new growth.

Availability

For conservation use: Commercial availability of Flageo saltmeadow cordgrass is rare; it is only available from specialized growers. Refer to the [New Jersey Plant Materials Center Conservation Plant Releases and Suppliers](#) brochure for sources. For more information on the availability, planting, and use, contact your local NRCS office or Soil and Water Conservation District.

For seed or plant increase: Vegetative production of Flageo saltmeadow cordgrass will be maintained by the USDA-NRCS Cape May PMC. Foundation material is available to nursery producers for increase and to other interested parties, as available.

For More Information

Cape May Plant Materials Center, 1536 Route 9 North, Cape May Court House, NJ, 609-465-5901,
<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/plant-materials/njpmc>.

Citation

Release brochure for Flageo saltmeadow cordgrass (*Spartina patens*). 2025. USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Cape May Plant Materials Center. Cape May Court House, NJ.

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>>



References

- Alderson, J. and W.C. Sharp. 1994. Grass varieties in the United States: Agriculture Handbook No. 170. USDA-Soil Conservation Service, Washington, D.C.
- Snell, S.C. 2024. Evaluation of Saltmeadow Cordgrass (*Spartina patens*) Varieties for Biomass Production in the Mid-Atlantic Coastal Region. USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Cape May Plant Materials Center. Cape May, NJ.

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