Introduction

Beach Bean is a dense ground cover that is commonly found in the coastal sands of south east Florida (Fig. 1). This plant forms a ground cover that is 6 to 12 inches in height but can occasionally be found climbing a small tree. The evergreen, trifoliate leaves have elliptic, 2 1/2- to 3 1/2-inch-long leaflets that are rounded at their apices. Small racemes of pink to purple flowers occur among these bright green leaves throughout the year. These beautiful flowers are followed by robust, woody pods.

General Information

Scientific name: Canavalia maritima

Pronunciation: kan-uh-VAL-ee-uh muh-RIT-tim-uh

Common name(s): Beach Bean, Bay Bean

Family: Leguminosea

Plant type: vine; ground cover

USDA hardiness zones: 10B through 11 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Figure 1. Beach Bean.

Origin: native to Florida

Uses: cascading down a wall

Availability: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

Description

Height: depends upon supporting structure

Spread: depends upon supporting structure
Canavalia maritima Beach Bean, Bay Bean

Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Plant habit: prostrate (flat); spreading
Plant density: open
Growth rate: fast
Texture: coarse

**Foliage**
Leaf arrangement: alternate
Leaf type: trifoliate
Leaf margin: entire
Leaf shape: elliptic (oval)
Leaf venation: brachidodrome; pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

**Flower**
Flower color: purple
Flower characteristic: year-round flowering

**Fruit**
Fruit shape: pod or pod-like
Fruit length: 3 to 6 inches
Fruit cover: dry or hard
Fruit color: brown
Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

**Trunk and Branches**
Trunk/bark/branches: not applicable
Current year stem/twig color: not applicable
Current year stem/twig thickness: not applicable

**Culture**
Light requirement: plant grows in full sun

Archival copy: for current recommendations see http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu or your local extension office.
**Canavalia maritima Beach Bean, Bay Bean**

**Soil tolerances:** acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam

**Drought tolerance:** high

**Soil salt tolerances:** good

**Plant spacing:** 24 to 36 inches

**Other**

**Roots:** not applicable

**Winter interest:** no special winter interest

**Outstanding plant:** not particularly outstanding

**Invasive potential:** not known to be invasive

**Pest resistance:** no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

**Use and Management**

This ground cover resists erosion by wind and light surf and is ideal for coastal landscapes. The bright green leaves and showy flowers of this plant are sure eye-catchers. It is a wonderful utility plant for stabilizing sandy soils and makes a nice bed for trees and shrubs. It might climb up onto dense shrubs and the trunks of trees. This could be a maintenance problem for some landscapes.

Beach Bean, as the name implies, has a high drought and salt spray tolerance. It prefers well-drained soils and full sun exposures.

**Pests and Diseases**

No pests or diseases are of major concern.