

## ***Spartina bakeri* Marsh Grass, Sand Cordgrass<sup>1</sup>**

Edward F. Gilman<sup>2</sup>

### **Introduction**

Marsh grass is a robust ornamental grass that can form clumps that are 18 to 20 feet in diameter (Fig.1). This grass may grow from 3 to 4 feet tall, and its fine-textured, wiry leaves form a fountain spray pattern. The upper surfaces of the leaves are dark green, but the lower surfaces are light green in color. The obscure flowers of this plant may occur in the early spring but are relatively scarce. The seed heads of this grass are generally 2 to 8 inches long, but the plant reproduces mainly by rhizomes.

### **General Information**

**Scientific name:** *Spartina bakeri*

**Pronunciation:** spar-TYE-nuh BAY-ker-rye

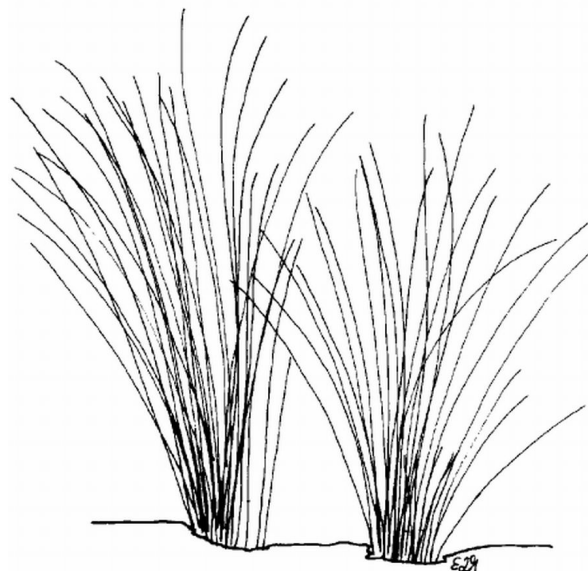
**Common name(s):** marsh grass, sand cordgrass

**Family:** *Gramineae*

**Plant type:** herbaceous; ornamental grass

**USDA hardiness zones:** 8B through 11 (Fig. 2)

**Planting month for zone 8:** year round



**Figure 1.** Marsh grass

**Planting month for zone 9:** year round

**Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** year round

**Origin:** native to Florida

**Uses:** reclamation plant; accent; border; edging; mass planting

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2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, 32611.



**Figure 2.** Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

**Leaf blade length:** more than 36 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** brown or tan

**Fall characteristic:** showy

**Description**

**Height:** 3 to 4 feet

**Spread:** 3 to 5 feet

**Plant habit:** vase shape

**Plant density:** moderate

**Growth rate:** moderate

**Texture:** fine

**Flower**

**Flower color:** brown

**Flower characteristic:** fall flowering

**Fruit**

**Fruit shape:** unknown

**Fruit length:** unknown

**Fruit cover:** unknown

**Fruit color:** unknown

**Fruit characteristic:** inconspicuous and not showy

**Foliage**

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf shape:** linear

**Leaf venation:** parallel

**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen

### Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** typically multi-trunked or clumping stems

**Current year stem/twig color:** not applicable

**Current year stem/twig thickness:** medium

### Culture

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

**Soil tolerances:** extended flooding; acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam; clay

**Drought tolerance:** high

**Soil salt tolerances:** good

**Plant spacing:** 36 to 60 inches

### Other

**Roots:** not applicable

**Winter interest:** plant has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers

**Outstanding plant:** plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

**Invasive potential:** aggressive, spreading plant

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

### Use and Management

Marsh grass can be used as an accent or border and is striking when planted in a mass. Space plants about 3 to 4 feet apart to form a mass of foliage several years after planting. It is a good native grass for use on the shorelines of ponds and streams and is exquisite when backlit by the sun. It also is suited for planting in and around water retention and detention areas because of its tolerance for wet soil.

Grow marsh grass in full sun or light shade on medium dry to wet soils. This plant can tolerate periodic flooding during the growing season and will grow well on the margins of sand ponds and fresh

water marshes. *Spartina patens* and *Spartina alterniflora* are tolerant of saline water and often grow in coastal saltwater marshes.

### Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.