

## Learning about Seashore Paspalum *Paspalum vaginatum*

Seashore Paspalum (*Paspalum vaginatum*), also called “biscuit grass” or “silt grass,” is a perennial turfgrass indigenous to brackish tropical and coastal areas worldwide. It is one of more than a dozen types of turfgrass commonly used to landscape roadsides, golf courses, athletic fields and other high-use areas. Seashore paspalum is particularly favored for golf courses in coastal areas receiving high quantities of ocean spray, as it can tolerate higher salinity levels than other grasses, such as Bermuda grass. It also tolerates high traffic because it grows dense, low to the ground and rapidly, competing well against weeds. It can withstand more than 2 inches of water above the soil surface during winter, flourishing most when water levels fluctuate from 2 inches above to 6 inches below the surface. These qualities make Seashore paspalum ideal for restoration of wetlands, oil and gas well sites and other areas damaged by erosion.

**Characteristics.** The leaves of Seashore paspalum may be bright green, blue green or dark green, with a coarse or a fine texture, depending on the variety. They range in length from 2.5–15 cm and in width from 3–8 mm. Leaves may be flat or folded inward lengthwise.

**Fruit.** Seeds are produced several times during the year but are seldom visible.

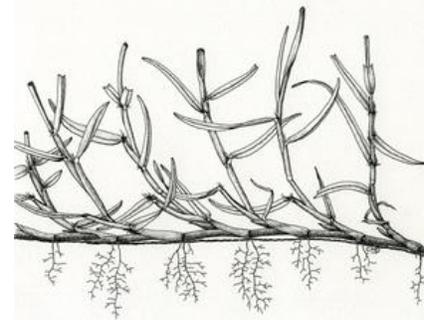
**Geographic Range.** Seashore paspalum is native in the U.S. from North Carolina to Florida and west to Texas. It occurs as far south as Argentina and in warm regions of the Eastern Hemisphere.

### Additional Information.

- Seashore paspalum is used as forage for horses, cattle and geese.
- It thrives best in a pH above 6.0 but can grow in pH from 3.6 to 10.2.
- Seashore paspalum is propagated asexually using stolons and rhizomes and it is available in sprigs, plugs and sod.
- Seashore paspalum develops higher shoot densities at lower mowing heights and grows faster the more often it's mowed. It is therefore relatively easy to regulate growth on golf courses by close management of the mowing regime.
- Manual propagation of Seashore paspalum generally occurs by using either sprigs that include both underground rhizomes and aboveground stolons, or by using only the stolons. Sprigs should be 6-8 inches long and have at least 2 vegetative nodes. Sprigs and stolons should be planted within 48 hours of being harvested. Stockpiles should be stored in moist, shady conditions and should be regularly rotated (turned) to prevent heat buildup and promote airflow.
- In addition to the continental U.S., it is used for turf in Hawaii, South Africa, New Zealand and Australia.

### References

- USDA – NRCS Plant Fact Sheet: Seashore Paspalum, accessed February 9, 2009, at [http://plants.usda.gov/plantguide/pdf/pg\\_pava.pdf](http://plants.usda.gov/plantguide/pdf/pg_pava.pdf)
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