

INLAND SEA OATS

Chasmanthium latifolium

(Michx.) Yates

Plant Symbol = CHLA5



J.S. Peterson@USDA NRCS.PLANTS Database

Alternate Names

Uniola latifolia Michaux; Indian woodoats, broad-leaf chasmanthium, northern sea oats, wild oats

Uses

Ornamental: Plant is used as ground cover in shady areas. Dried plants and seed heads popular for cut and dried arrangements. Plants used to accent open woodland gardens. In northern part of its range inland sea oats is used for texture and color contrast in plantings.

Wildlife: Inland sea oats is a minor component of the woodland habitat used as cover in open areas. The seed is used as food by birds and rodents. Some butterflies use the leaves as host for eggs.

Livestock: Cattle will graze inland sea oats, but accessibility and lack of abundance keep it from being an important forage species.

Erosion Control: Inland sea oats provides ground cover vegetation for critically eroding shaded areas, thus reducing soil erosion and improving water quality. Inland sea oats has proven salt tolerant and can prove useful in dune management where sunlight is not too intense.

Status

Please consult the PLANTS website and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status (e.g. threatened or endangered species, state noxious status, and wetland indicator values)

Description

Inland sea oats is a rhizomatous clump forming perennial with characteristic drooping panicles. The plant can reach four feet in height, but is most often shorter. The leaf blades are broadly lanceolate (up to one inch wide at base) giving it the common name broad-leafed chasmanthium. Seed heads are borne in open panicles up to 10 inches long. The drooping panicles are initially green turning straw colored as seed ripen. Various shades of red sometimes occur as the fruiting spikelets mature.

Adaptation

Range

Inland sea oats is found from Pennsylvania south through Florida, in the upper mid-west to Wisconsin and south through Iowa Missouri and Kansas. In the south this species ranges from Florida through Arizona.

Site

Throughout its range, inland sea oats is found in moderate or greater shade. Its adaptation varies from moist to well drained sites in various parts of its range. It is never found on droughty sites. In the mid-west and north central states (region 3), this species is considered a facultative wet site species growing on deep moist well drained sites. In other regions of its range inland sea oats is variously rated as upland or facultative, which is indicative of the great adaptability.

Establishment

This species may be propagated from seed as plugs or vegetatively by divisions or plugs. As an ornamental, place plants two to three feet apart along a garden border.

Management

Inland sea oats is moderately tolerant of drought conditions within its range of adaptation, and will accept partial shade throughout most of its range. In northern parts of its range, inland sea oats is considered a moist site species. Plants will reseed and may become aggressive if not properly managed.

Cultivars, Improved and Selected Materials (and area of origin)

None known, though it is commonly available from selected seed companies and nurseries. Because of the wide range and variability in plants of inland sea oats plants or seeds should be from local sources.

Prepared By and Species Coordinator

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

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