



## Salt-Tolerant Ocean Beach Native Plants for Coastal Georgia

### Introduction

Plants growing at or near the beach are subjected to environmental conditions much different than those planted further inland. Factors such as blowing sand, poor soils, high temperatures, and excessive drainage all influence how well plants perform in coastal landscapes. Salt spray, however, has the most significant effect on plant growth. Plants respond with leaf loss, burned foliage, stunted growth, or death. Most plants will not tolerate salt accumulating on their foliage, making plant selection for beachfront landscapes particularly challenging.

The following Georgia coastal plain native plant salt tolerant list has been compiled to assist homeowners and landscape professionals to choose plants appropriately for coastal landscapes. The native plants listed have been reported by various sources to tolerate salt stress better than most landscaped plants. The lists are divided by plant type (trees, shrubs, vines, groundcovers, etc) and three levels of salt tolerance (high, moderate, slight).

Properties within at least  $1/8$  of a mile from the oceanfront should be landscaped with plants known to have some level of salt tolerance. Properties along or near brackish water estuaries should also be landscaped with plants possessing some degree of salt tolerance, though not necessarily as high as those on the oceanfront.

## KEY:

In general, salt tolerance of a plant relates to the resistance and ability to grow under conditions of (1) high winds, (2) salt spray, (3) alkaline soils, and (4) infertile, sandy soils. The tolerance of a given plant to salt may be affected if any of the four conditions become extreme.

**Highly salt tolerant** – plants tolerant of the direct salt spray such as that received along dunes and immediately adjacent to the oceanfront; plants are highly resistant to salt drift and can be used in exposed environments.

**Moderately salt tolerant** – plants tolerant of moderate levels of salt spray, such as that received in landscapes adjacent to the beach front, but which are sheltered by other plants, structures, or natural dunes; plants tolerate some salt spray but grow best when protected by buildings, fences, or plantings of more salt-tolerant species.

**Slightly salt tolerant** – Plants with the lowest level of tolerance to salt spray. These plants should be used only in areas receiving some protection from direct salt spray, either from a building or other vegetation. In areas that are completely sheltered, plants with no known salt tolerance can be grown; plants that have poor tolerance should always be used well back of exposed areas and be protected by buildings, fences, or plantings of more salt-tolerant species.

For more information regarding Georgia's coastal plain native plants, or to utilize the CoastScapes coastal plains native plant search engine, go to [www.coastscapes.org](http://www.coastscapes.org).

## Plant Choice Considerations

Although the plants provided in the list below may be native to the coastal plain region of Georgia, individual plants may not grow everywhere in the region. In addition, the characteristics of any site will typically vary from place to place and some plants may do better than others at various places within a site. Putting plants in the right places is the key to ensuring they survive and remain healthy in your landscape. When selecting plants from this list, remember that many factors determine the suitability of a plant for a particular location. Consider light requirements, local climate, soil type, moisture, adaptability, hardiness, heat

tolerance, and other factors. All plants listed are suited to the USDA Hardiness Zone 8. Please check to see if your zone falls within the 8a or 8b hardiness zone and then choose plants accordingly. Choose native plants that match and thrive under the conditions in your landscape and you will have a CoastScapes landscape! You will reduce the need for water, fertilizers, pesticides, and pruning while providing valuable wildlife habitat.

Although these native plants have evolved to the local conditions, new plantings will require regular watering before they become established. Root establishment can take from months to one to several years, depending on the original size of the plant.



*Ilex vomitoria*

Source: Alvin Diamond, Troy University

# Salt-Tolerant Ocean Beach Native Plants for Coastal Georgia

## Small Trees (10' ~ 30' Tall)

### Highly Salt Tolerant

<i>Ilex vomitoria</i>	yaupon holly
<i>Morella cerifera</i>	wax myrtle
<i>Osmanthus americanus</i>	devilwood
<i>Pinus clausa</i>	sand pine
<i>Prunus angustifolia</i>	Chickasaw plum
<i>Quercus geminata</i>	sand live oak

### Moderately Salt Tolerant

<i>Acacia farnesiana</i>	sweet acacia
<i>Ilex myrtifolia</i>	myrtle dahoon
<i>Magnolia virginiana</i>	sweetbay
<i>Oxydendrum arboreum</i>	sourwood
<i>Persea borbonia</i>	redbay

### Slightly Salt Tolerant

<i>Carpinus caroliniana</i>	American hornbeam
<i>Prunus caroliniana</i>	Carolina laurelcherry
<i>Salix caroliniana</i>	coastal plain willow

## Large Trees (over 30' Tall)

### Highly Salt Tolerant

<i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i>	honeylocust
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<i>Juniperus silicicola</i>	southern redcedar
<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	eastern redcedar
<i>Quercus phellos</i>	willow oak
<i>Quercus virginiana</i>	live oak

### Moderately Salt Tolerant

<i>Acer rubrum</i>	red maple
<i>Betula nigra</i>	river birch
<i>Celtis laevigata</i>	sugarberry
<i>Ilex cassine</i>	dahoon holly
<i>Magnolia grandiflora</i>	southern magnolia
<i>Nyssa sylvatica</i>	black gum
<i>Pinus elliotii</i>	slash pine
<i>Quercus hemisphaerica</i>	Darlington oak
<i>Quercus nigra</i>	water oak
<i>Quercus shumardii</i>	Shumard's oak
<i>Robinia pseudocacia</i>	black locust

### Slightly Salt Tolerant

<i>Fagus grandifolia</i>	American beech
<i>Ilex opaca</i>	American holly
<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i>	sweetgum
<i>Pinus glabra</i>	spruce pine
<i>Pinus palustris</i>	longleaf pine
<i>Platanus occidentalis</i>	American sycamore
<i>Taxodium distichum</i>	bald cypress

## Shrubs

### Highly Salt Tolerant

<i>Ilex vomitoria</i>	yaupon holly
<i>Iva imbricata</i>	seacoast marsh elder
<i>Morella cerifera</i>	wax myrtle

*Yucca aloifolia*

aloe yucca

*Yucca filamentosa*

Adam's needle

*Yucca flaccida*

weak-leaf yucca

*Yucca gloriosa*

moundlily yucca

*Zamia pumila*

coontie

### Moderately Salt Tolerant

*Baccharis halimifolia*

groundsel bush

*Borrchia frutescens*

busy seaside tansy

*Clethra alnifolia*

coastal sweetpepperbush

*Forestiera segregata*

Florida swamp privet

*Ilex glabra*

inkberry

*Iva frutescens*

marsh elder

*Opuntia humifusa*

devil's tongue

*Opuntia pusilla*

cockspur pricklypear

*Yucca filamentosa*

Adam's needle

### Slightly Salt Tolerant

*Callicarpa americana*

American beautyberry

*Erythrina herbacea*

redcardinal

*Ilex verticillata*

common winterberry

*Photinia pyrifolia*

red chokeberry

(formerly *Aronia arbutifolia*)

*Viburnum dentatum*

southern arrowwood

*Viburnum obovatum*

small-leaf arrowwood



*Ipomoea pes-caprae*

Source: SINERR

## Vines

### Highly Salt Tolerant

*Ipomoea imperati*

*Ipomoea pes-caprae*

*Ipomoea quamoclit*

*Smilax smallii*

beach morning-glory

bayhops, railroad vine

cypressvine

lanceleaf greenbriar

### Moderately Salt Tolerant

*Centrosema virginianum*

*Gelsemium sempervirens*

*Lonicera sempervirens*

*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*

*Strophostyles umbellata*

spurred butterfly pea

evening trumpetflower

trumpet honeysuckle

Virginia creeper

pink fuzzybean

### Slightly Salt Tolerant

*Ampelopsis arborea*

peppervine

*Passiflora incarnata*

purple passionflower

*Passiflora lutea*

yellow passionflower

*Vitis rotundifolia*

muscadine

*Wisteria frutescens*

American wisteria

## Palms

### Highly Salt Tolerant

*Sabal minor*

dwarf palmetto

*Sabal palmetto*

cabbage palm

*Serenoa repens*

saw palmetto

### Moderately Salt Tolerant

*Rhapidophyllum hystrix*

needle palm



*Uniola paniculata* Source: UGA

## Ornamental Grasses

### Highly Salt Tolerant

*Muhlenbergia capillaris*

hairawn muhly

*Panicum amarum*

bitter panicgrass

*Spartina bakeri*

sand cordgrass

*Spartina patens*

salt meadow cordgrass

*Uniola paniculata*\*\*

seaoats\*\*

### Slightly Salt Tolerant

*Panicum virgatum*

switchgrass

**\*\* PLEASE NOTE!!** Wild seaoats (*Uniola paniculata*) is protected in Georgia not because it is endangered or threatened, but because it performs a valuable ecological service by stabilizing sand dunes. It is unlawful to pick wild sea oats (even the seeds), but you can buy the plants or the seeds from native plant nurseries who have permits to propagate protected species.



*Gaillardia pulchella* Source: FL Native Plant Society

## Perennials

### Highly Salt Tolerant

<i>Borrchia frutescens</i>	bushy seaside tansy
<i>Croton punctatus</i>	beach croton
<i>Gaillardia aestivalis</i>	lanceleaf blanketflower
<i>Gaillardia pulchella</i>	firewheel, blanket flower
<i>Iva imbricata</i>	seacoast marsh elder
<i>Sesuvium portulacastrum</i>	shoreline seapurslane
<i>Solidago sempervirens</i>	seaside goldenrod

### Moderately Salt Tolerant

<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	butterfly milkweed
<i>Helianthus debilis</i>	cucumberleaf sunflower
<i>Heterotheca subaxillaris</i>	camphorweed
<i>Kosteletzkya virginica</i>	Virginia saltmarsh mallow
<i>Malvastrum arboreus</i>	Turk's cap
<i>Mimosa strigillosa</i>	powderpuff

<i>Monarda punctata</i>	spotted beebalm
<i>Oenothera humifusa</i>	seabeach evening primrose
<i>Pityopsis graminifolia</i>	narrowleaf silkgrass
<i>Sabatia stellaris</i>	rose of Plymouth
<i>Salvia</i> ssp.	sage (please refer to the CoastScapes native plant search engine for species list)
<i>Stokesia laevis</i>	Stokes' aster
<i>Verbena</i> ssp.	verbena

### Slightly Salt Tolerant

<i>Baptisia alba</i>	white wild indigo
<i>Coreopsis</i> ssp.	tickseed (please refer to the CoastScapes native plant search engine for species list)
<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>	eastern purple coneflower
<i>Hibiscus moscheutos</i>	crimsoneyed rosemallow
<i>Hibiscus coccineus</i>	scarlet rosemallow
<i>Glandularia canadensis</i>	rose mock vervain
<i>Rudbeckia fulgida</i>	orange coneflower
<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	blackeyed Susan

### Ground Covers

#### Moderately Salt Tolerant

<i>Chamaesyce polygonifolia</i>	seaside sandmat
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#### Slightly Salt Tolerant

<i>Hypericum reductum</i>	Atlantic St. Johnswort
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