

Sporobolus virginicus

(L.) Kunth

MARINE COUCH

Flowering period: All year subject to rainfall.

Description: Rhizomatous perennial grass to 40 cm tall, often forming thick swards with robust, scaly rhizome. Leaves couch-like, thin, 50 mm long, often inrolled under drought conditions. Flowers inconspicuous, in radiating spikes up to 10 cm across. Seeds small and brown-black, shed throughout the year.

Pollination: Wind pollinated.

Distribution: Cosmopolitan species of saline and coastal areas particularly salt marshes and salt-affected areas in coastal and inland regions. On the Perth coast confined to estuarine margins and limestone areas on the coast, often forming small tussocks in pockets of soil in limestone.

Propagation: Easily propagated from rhizome or shoot divisions taken at any time of the year but more successfully during early summer when the plant is in active growth. Plant divisions directly into moist soil in restoration sites or propagate in pots.

Uses in restoration: Not used commonly along the Perth coast however a useful species to replace introduced couch. Marine couch is susceptible to grass-specific herbicides so care is required to ensure all introduced couch is removed from a site prior to planting marine couch.

Notes: The tolerance of the species to drought and its ability to grow with saline or brackish water make this plant ideal for developing a native lawn where water supplies are limited or salinised.



Habit



Flowering plant



Flowering plant



Distribution