



Seeded Seashore Paspalum

Where to Plant Sea Spray

Seashore paspalum is, of course, a warmseason grass, so *Sea Spray* is best for courses no farther north than 30–35° of latitude. Within its “comfort zone,” it displays excellent resistance to dollar spot in addition to its primary characteristic of salt tolerance. *Sea Spray* is an excellent choice for environmentally conscious superintendents, especially those with water quality issues such as a need to use effluent water for irrigation. Certainly in areas where water shortages occur, or where saline conditions are unusually high, or where water reclamation projects are undertaken, *Sea Spray* provides an attractive option for beautiful turf despite these conditions.

How To Establish Sea Spray

Storage

First, it is important to keep storage considerations in mind, as proper storage is the first step in successful establishment. Seed is perishable, so it needs to be stored in an area with low humidity and cool temperatures—for best results, store in an air conditioned environment. Furthermore, the seed should be used within 45-60 days of receipt.

Surface Preparation

Whether establishing a new seedbed or renovating existing turf, it is important to begin with a firm and smooth soil surface, relatively free of debris. If renovating existing turf, apply a nonselective herbicide in order to kill all existing turf, then rake the soil to remove excess matter and create a smooth surface. Fumigation is the most effective alternative in removing undesirable grasses as well. Bermudagrass is best removed with fumigation, since non-selective herbicides may not completely kill all of the vegetative tissue. Note that seashore paspalum is sensitive to some herbicides, so check the herbicide label before applying. Good soil-to-seed contact is very important to successful establishment, so the surface should be lightly raked and then gently rolled after seeding. For best performance, the soil needs to be tilled to a depth of 2 to 3 inches, which provides a lodging place for the seed and affords good soil-to-seed contact. Utilizing a “drill seeder” (like a Brillion Seeder) provides the best method of incorporating the seeding into the soil. Another alternative is using mulch or turf blankets to providing a good cover for establishing *Sea Spray*.

Seeding Rates

The recommended seeding rate is 1 -2 lbs per 1,000 sq ft (4.9-9.8 g/m²).

The best time to seed is late spring through mid-summer; fall plantings are not recommended except in warm climates, where seeding can be done year-round. The ideal germination temperatures are 80° to 95°F (27°-35°C). The use of mulch or seed blanket can be used for improving the moisture retention of the seedbed.

Watering During Establishment

Although seashore paspalum is well known for its tolerance to salt, it is essential to establish the variety with fresh, potable water. Water that is < 2000 ppm total TDS is strongly recommended.

Keep the seedbed continually moist with fresh water by irrigating frequently throughout the day during germination, which should occur on an average of 21 days or sooner with optimum soil temperatures 80° to 95°F (27°-35°C).

It is critical to maintain constant surface moisture through light and frequent irrigations during the first 14 days after planting. This may include a range of six to seven 5-minute events per day in order to maintain proper soil-surface moisture, depending upon weather factors such as temperature, wind, and cloud cover.

Deep infrequent irrigations- About 1 inch (2.5cm) every week or two- are best throughout the growing season.

Pre-Plant Fertilizer Levels

The success of any turfgrass establishment is not only based on an excellent turfgrass selection (like *Sea Spray*), but also on good nutrient. We strongly recommend soil testing (and water analysis) for recommending the correct nutrition. Fertilizer applications should be strongly considered in both pre-plant and during establishment. Scotts Poly-S 16-25-12 can provide an initial nutrient base during pre-plant and early establishment.

Mowing/Topdressing/Verticutting

The first mowing will depend on if it's for the establishment of a green, or other higher mowed turf. For green establishment, the first mowing should be at 0.25 inches (6 mm), then bringing the mowing height down slowly, while maintaining canopy and coverage. The first few mowing are critical, since the plant reacts very aggressively to its first cut. The plant will grow laterally much more aggressively, and establishment is greatly enhanced by this activity. Light topdressing should take place with the same topdressing mix used for greens mix. This should take place about 4-6 weeks after germination, and should be done every 10-21 days. Light verticutting or spiking is recommended 5-6 weeks of age, or when stolons start rapidly growing.

Removal of too much leaf tissue may be detrimental to establishment, and cutting the stolons should be your primary goal. Topdressing after verticutting or spiking is recommended, and this will provide more uniformity to the putting surface. For other turf areas, like tees, fairways, roughs and other higher cut turfgrass, the first mowing is recommended when it reaches approximately 1 inch (2.5 cm) in height. This will reduce the incidence of scalping that could occur if allowed to grow higher than 1 inch in height. Once again, regular mowing will strongly encourage lateral growth and better turf coverage. Efforts to prevent scalping are strongly encouraged, since scalping can set back the grow-in by several weeks.

Fertilizer applications should emphasize potassium and phosphorus over nitrogen—the recommended ratio for the first month is 1:2:3 or 1:3:4. Apply 0.3-0.5 lbs of nitrogen per 1,000 sq ft (1.5-2.4 g/m²) in the nitrate (NO₃) form weekly until uniform turf coverage is achieved. This can be applied either in granular, liquid form or through the use of fertigation. Then, fertilize annually at a rate of 2 to 3 lbs of nitrogen per 1,000 sq ft (9.8-14.7 g/m²) during early fall or spring, and do not exceed 4 lbs (1.8 g) per year.

Fertilizer Levels

As mentioned, fertilize annually at a rate of 2 to 3 lbs of nitrogen per 1,000 sq ft during early fall or spring, and do not exceed 4 lbs per year. Also, avoid applications of more than 0.5 lbs of fast-release, water-soluble nitrogen per 1,000 sq ft (2.4 g/m²)—high-index salt fertilizers work very well with *Sea Spray*. High levels of phosphorus should always be available to the plant. In salt-affected environments, calcium, magnesium, manganese, and iron should be monitored for deficiencies.

Watering

Deep, infrequent irrigations—about 1 inch every week or two—are best throughout the growing season.

Mowing

Able to tolerate cutting heights as low as 1/10 inch (0.25 cm), *Sea Spray* is an excellent choice for greens, but it serves equally well on tees, fairways, and roughs as well as sports and recreational turf. The recommended mowing height is 0.5 to 1.5 inches (1.3-3.8 cm) with a reel mower. To minimize the possibility of scalping, especially during the summer season, gradually reduce the mowing height during peak growing conditions.

Additional Care

For the best turf quality as well as improved winter color in mild climates, annual light renovation, aeration, and topdressing are strongly recommended in early to mid-September, but allow time for full recovery prior to the onset of cooler temperatures. In areas where *Sea Spray* seashore paspalum would go off color due to cool temperatures, overseeding can be performed to maintain optimal turf color. Overseed after renovation and aeration programs with salt-tolerant perennial ryegrasses at 10 to 15 lbs per 1,000 sq ft (48-73 g/m²) for conventional turf.



9180 San Fernando Rd • P.O. Box 1579 • Sun Valley, California 91353
(213) 626-9668 • (800) 621-0315 • FAX (213) 626-4920

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