



## Plants for coastal dunes and sandy inland areas

Dunes protect shore property from damage caused by coastal storms. This section describes plants that can be used to stabilize or build dunes. All have high tolerance to salt spray and strong winds. They can be used to landscape shore property and are also suited to low-fertility sandy areas inland.

## American beachgrass

*Ammophila breviligulata*

**ZONES:** 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

**USES:** Stabilizing and building frontal sand dunes; stabilizing droughty sandy areas inland.

**GROWTH RATE:** Plants 18 inches apart provide effective cover in 1 year.

**SITE CONDITIONS:** Grows in low-fertility, slightly acid, loamy and sandy soil; excellent drought tolerance; poor shade tolerance; requires well-drained soil.

American beachgrass grows to a height of 3 to 4 feet. It spreads rapidly by underground stems to form erosion-resistant cover but requires fertilizer for dense, enduring growth. It traps windblown sand to build dunes. Two varieties, 'Cape' and 'Hatteras', are commercially available. Establish by planting nursery-grown culms or stems 12 to 18 inches apart.



## Bayberry

*Myrica pensylvanica*

**ZONES:** 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

**USES:** Versatile shrub for landscaping and revegetating sand dunes and inland areas; berries provide food for birds.

**GROWTH RATE:** Produces fruit in 3 to 4 years; matures in 7 to 8 years.

**SITE CONDITIONS:** Grows in low-fertility, slightly acid, clayey, loamy, and sandy soils; excellent drought tolerance; poor shade tolerance; tolerates moderately well drained soil.

Bayberry is a semievergreen shrub that grows to a height of 6 to 8 feet. It has gray, scented berries that are eaten by birds. Fruit appears only where both male and female shrubs are planted in the same area. Roots fix nitrogen, which helps bayberry grow in low-fertility soil. Establish by planting bare-root or container-grown seedlings 2 years old.





**Virginia creeper**  
*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*

**ZONES:** 5, 6, 7, 8

**USES:** Combining with other plants to form ground cover on coastal sand dunes; elsewhere, a partial cover and accent plant; fruit eaten by many species of songbirds.

**GROWTH RATE:** Plants 18 inches apart provide cover in 1 to 2 years.

**SITE CONDITIONS:** Grows in low-fertility, slightly acid, loamy and sandy soils; excellent drought tolerance; fair shade tolerance; requires well-drained soil.

Virginia creeper is a deciduous vine that has five palmate leaves. In fall, leaves turn scarlet and dark-purple berries appear. Establish on dunes by planting nursery-grown plants.



**Beach plum**  
*Prunus maritima*

**ZONES:** 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

**USES:** Revegetating sand dunes; beautification; edible fruit.

**GROWTH RATE:** Produces flowers and fruit in 3 to 4 years; matures in 7 to 8 years.

**SITE CONDITIONS:** Grows in medium-fertility, slightly acid, loamy and sandy soils; excellent drought tolerance; fair shade tolerance; tolerates moderately well drained soil.

Beach plum is a deciduous shrub that grows to a height of about 7 feet. It is native to coastal sand dunes. White flowers appear in May and large edible fruit in August or September. Beach plum can be grown in areas other than coastal dunes. Establish by planting bare-root or container-grown seedlings 1 year old.

## Dusty-miller (beach wormwood)

*Artemisia stelleriana*

**ZONES:** 5, 6, 7, 8

**USES:** Ornamental and stabilizing cover for coastal dunes.

**GROWTH RATE:** Plants 2 feet apart provide complete cover in 2 years.

**SITE CONDITIONS:** Grows in low-fertility, slightly acid, loamy and sandy soils; excellent drought tolerance; poor shade tolerance; requires well-drained soil.

Dusty-miller grows to a height of 1 to 2 feet. It has furry-textured, grayish-white stems and leaves and spreads by rhizomes to form a loose ground cover. Establish by planting divisions of old plants or nursery-grown plants.



## Rugosa rose

*Rosa rugosa*

**ZONES:** 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

**USES:** Shrub for stabilizing sand dunes and forming borders for pathways through dunes; landscaping; provides food and cover for songbirds and rabbits.

**GROWTH RATE:** Produces fruit in 1 to 2 years; matures in 6 to 7 years.

**SITE CONDITIONS:** Grows in medium-fertility, slightly acid, loamy and sandy soils; excellent drought tolerance; fair shade tolerance; tolerates moderately well drained soil.

Rugosa rose is a sprawling shrub that grows to a height of 3 to 5 feet. It spreads by stout underground stems. Surface stems have sharp spines. Dark-green leaves turn bright orange in fall. White, pink, or purple flowers blossom most of the summer, and red fruit appears in fall. Establish by planting seedlings 1 to 2 years old.

