Gardening at the Beach 101: Salt Tolerant Plants

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Plants at the Beach

Must be able to tolerate:

- Extremely sandy soils
  - All are drought tolerant unless otherwise noted
- High soil pH
- Wind and Salt spray
- Sun
- Deer
  - unless noted, all plants are at least moderately deer resistant
Types of Plants

- Large and Small Shrubs
- Accent Plants and Palms
- Ornamental Grasses
- Flowers
Large Evergreen Shrubs

- Over 8’ tall
- Excellent for screening
- Can provide shelter for more tender plants
Elaeagnus

- *Elaeagnus pungens*
- **Extremely tough and vigorous!**
- 10’-15’ tall and wide
- Leaves green on top, silver underneath
- Extremely **fragrant flowers** in fall
- Cultivars:
  - ‘Maculata’ – leaves have yellow center
  - ‘Aurea’ – leaves have yellow edge
Pineapple Guava

- *Acca sellowiana*
- Large rounded shrub, to 8’ x 8’ or more
- Silver-green foliage
- **Tropical pink and red flowers** in May-June, edible petals
- **Edible fruit in fall** (feijoa) – licorice flavor
Japanese Privet

- *Ligustrum japonicum*
- Sun or part shade
- **Rapid grower**, to 10’ tall and wide+
- Grown as large shrub or small tree
- Cultivars:
  - ‘Recurvifolium’ – most common, wavy dark green leaf
Yaupon

- *Ilex vomitoria*
- Upright shrub, 15’-20’ tall
- Can remove lower limbs to grow as small tree
- May suckers to form thickets
- Native
- **Red berries** persist all winter on female plants
Weeping Yaupon

- Often planted as an accent
- 15’-20’ tall, 10’ – 15’ wide
- Berries on female plants
- Cultivars:
  - ‘Folsom’s Weeping’ – female
  - ‘Pendula’ – seed grown, may be male or female
Oleander

- *Nerium oleander*
- Large rounded shrub, 6’ – 12’ tall and wide
- **Pink or white flowers** during summer
- **Poisonous white sap** produced from cut stems
- May be damaged in very cold winters
Pittosporum

- *Pittosporum tobira*
- Large rounded shrub, 10’ – 12’ tall and wide
- Fragrant white flowers in April/May
- **Remove lower limbs to make tree form**
- **Variegated forms** are common
- NOT DEER RESISTANT
Wax Myrtle
- *Morella cerifera*
- Similar growth form to Pittosporum
- Prone to wind damage
- Native

Carolina Cherry Laurel
- *Prunus caroliniana*
- Similar growth form to Yaupon (does not sucker)
- Native
Small Evergreen Shrubs

- Under 8’ tall
- Often used as foundation plantings
- Often planted in groups (massed) or as background to more colorful plants

‘Carissa’ Holly, top
Indian Hawthorn, bottom
Dwarf Pittosporum
- ‘Wheeler’s Dwarf’
  - Green leaf, 3’-4’ tall and wide
- Mojo, Cream de Mint
  - Variegated, 2’-3’ tall and wide
- NOT DEER RESISTANT

Dwarf Yaupon
- 3’-4’ tall, 4’-5’ wide
- No berries
- Cultivars include:
  - ‘Nana’
  - ‘Bordeaux’
  - ‘Shillings’
‘Carissa’ Holly

- *Ilex chinensis*
- 3’-4’ tall, 4’-5’ wide
- Large leaf with pointed tip
- **No berries**
- Other Chinese Hollies:
  - ‘Rotunda’ - 4’ x 5’, very thorny, red berries
  - ‘Needlepoint’ – 15’ x 10’, red berries
Indian Hawthorne

- *Rhaphiolepis umbellata*
- **Leaf spot** can be problem
- **Blooms April/May**, purple berries in fall
- **Many cultivars** – Leaf spot resistant:
  - ‘Olivia’ – white, 4’ x 5’
  - ‘Eleanor Tabor’ – pink, 3’ – 4’
  - ‘Eskimo’ – white, 6’ – 8’
  - ‘Majestic Beauty’ – 8’ x 10’
- **NOT DEER RESISTANT**
Majestic Beauty
**Rosemary**

- *Rosmarinus officinalis*
- **Very tough!**
- Blue flowers Feb-April
- Ornamental and culinary
- Upright and weeping cultivars available
- **Upright types** grow 4’-6’ tall and wide!
- **Weeping types** grow 2’-3’ tall and 4’-6’ wide
‘Blue Pacific’ Shore Juniper

- *Juniperus conferta*
- 1’ tall, spreads 3’-6’
- Nice texture
- Other groundcover junipers:
  - ‘Blue Rug’, ‘Bar Harbor’, ‘Blue Chip’ – very low, 6” x 4’
  - Andorra – 18” high x 4’ wide
Accent Plants and Palms

- Planted as a focal point or to draw attention
- **Architectural form or bold color**
- May be planted as single specimen rather than in groups
Japanese Black Pine

- *Pinus thunbergii*
- 10’ – 20’ tall, irregular shape
- **Short lived, 5-10 years**
- Dense, shrubby cultivars are available
Hollywood Juniper

- *Juniperus chinensis*
- 10’ – 15’ x 5’-10’
- Unique, twisted growth habit
- Cultivars:
  - ‘Robusta Green’
  - ‘Torulosa’
Loquat

- *Eriobotrya japonica*
- Large shrub or small tree, 15’+ x 15’+
- Large, leathery leaves – shelter from strong wind
- **Fragrant flowers** in fall followed by **sweet edible fruit** in spring
- Moderately deer resistant
Live Oak

- *Quercus virginiana*
- **The most wind resistant tree**
- **Extremely long lived**
- Become gnarled and **wide spreading** with age
- Up to 80’ x 80’ – but much smaller where sheared by wind
Vitex, Chaste Tree

- *Vitex agnus-castus*
- Large shrub or multi-stemmed tree
- 10’-15’ high and wide
- Aromatic blue flowers all summer
- Very tough!
Vitex, Chaste Tree

When grown as a shrub, can cut back each year like butterfly bush (back to 2’ tall)

Tree form specimens usually have multiple trunks
Crape Myrtle

- *Lagerstromia* hybrids
- Many cultivars, from 5’ to 30’ – **choose variety that fits your space**!
- Summer flowers can be white, all shades of pink, lavender
- Some have attractive bark
- Can be trained as **multi stemmed or single stem**
- No need for drastic winter pruning!
Crape Myrtle Cultivars

- ‘Miami’
  - upright to 20’, dark pink flowers, good bark
- ‘Natchez’
  - spreading vase to 25’, white, exceptional bark
- ‘Muskogee’
  - lavender pink, Upright to 20’ x 15’
- ‘Dynamite’
  - Red, Upright to 20’ x 10’
- ‘Sioux’
  - bright pink, Upright to 15’ x 12’
Century Plant

- Agave americana
- 6’ x 6’
- Actually bloom about every 10 years – main plant dies after flowering
- Leaves have very sharp tips
- Extremely tough!
Yucca, Adam’s Needle

- *Yucca filamentosa*
- Native
- 2’ x 2’, summer flower spikes to 5’
- This species NEVER FORMS TRUNKS
- Broken roots regenerate new plants
Spineless Prickly Pear

- *Opuntia ellisiana* ‘Burbank Spineless’
- No large spines, some small hair-like prickles
- 3’- 4’ tall and wide, evergreen

Fruit

Flowers
Sago Palm

- *Cycas revoluta*
- 3’-4’ tall, 4’-6’ wide
- May form short trunk after many years
- Foliage may burn in cold winters
Palmetto, Cabbage Palm

- *Sabal palmetto*
- Rarely over 20’ in NC
- Seedlings take up to 10 years to start forming trunks!
- Can leave ‘bootstraps’ on trunk or remove
Pindo or Jelly Palm

- *Butia capitata*
- Up to 15’ tall
- Very stout trunks
- Long, feather type leaf
- Fall ripening fruits can be used to make jelly

Large clusters of fruit ripen in fall
European Fan Palm

- *Chamaerops humulis*
- Relatively slow growing, to 10’ x 10’
- **May form multiple short trunks with age**
- More drought tolerant than Dwarf palmetto, *Sabal minor*
Ornamental Grasses

- Excellent textural contrast to shrubs and flowers
- Very wind tolerant
- Deer resistant
- Cut back in late winter (Feb.)
**Muhly Grass**

- *Muhlenbergia capillaris*
- 4’ tall in bloom, 3’ x 3’ mound
- Blooms fall
- Native
- Semievergreen, but best if cut back in winter
Panic Grass, Switch Grass

- *Panicum virgatum*
- Native to E. US
- ‘Shenandoah’, 3’ x 2’, burgundy leaves
- ‘Northwind’, 5’ x 2’, upright
- ‘Cloud Nine’, large, 8’ x 6’, strong stems
‘Cloud Nine’ in fall

‘Shenandoah’
‘Prairie Fire’
Miscanthus, Maiden Grass

- *Miscanthus sinensis*
- Large fall blooming grasses
- Many selections ranging from 3’ – 8’
- Recommended varieties
  - ‘Cosmopolitan’ – 6’, white variegated
  - ‘Hinjo’ and ‘Stricta’ – 5’, gold band variegated
  - ‘Morning Light’, ‘Graziella’ – 5’, narrow leave blade
More Miscanthus

‘Adagio’ – dwarf, 3’-4’ in bloom

‘Gold Bar’ – new dwarf gold band variegated type, 3’ tall
Lawn Grasses

- Zoysia
  - Darker green than bermuda
- Bermuda
  - Spreads vigorously
- Irrigation essential
  - Centipede – not salt tolerant!
  - St. Augustine – not drought tolerant!
Flowers

- For color and seasonal interest
- Most need some protection from direct salt spray
- Most need some additional watering for best performance
- **Annuals** – live one season
- **Perennials** – live multiple years
Blue Daze
Evolvulus glomerata

- Annual, possibly perennial
- Blue flowers all summer
- Flowers close in afternoon
- Low spreading plants, 8” tall x 2’ wide
- Good for containers or as bedding plants
Purslane
*Portulaca oleracea*

- **Annual**
- Many colors (not blue or purple)
- **Very low, 6” x 12”-18”**
- Flowers close after midday
- Do well in containers or ground
Vinca
*Catharanthus roseus*

- **Annual**
- Often self seeds, but reverts to purple
- **Loves heat!**
- **Many varieties**
  - **Upright types:** ‘Pacifica’ 12”, ‘Cora’ 15”, ‘Cooler’ 14”
  - **Trailing Varieties:** ‘Mediterranean’, ‘Cora Cascade’
Pentas

*Pentas lanceolata*

- **Annual**
- Grow 12” – 24” tall depending on variety
- Many colors: white, red, pink, lavender
- Bloom all summer
- Great nectar source for butterflies
Coleus

- **Solenostemon**
- **Annual**
- Many leaf colors and shapes
- 1’ to 3’ high
- Afternoon shade helps
- **Need water!** NOT drought tolerant
Hardy Ice Plant
*Delosperma cooperi*

- **Perennial**
- **6” x 3’**
- Flowers late spring and summer
- Extremely easy to propagate by cuttings
- Foliage semi-evergreen
Gaura

- Perennial
- *Gaura lindheimeri*
- Many varieties
  - 1’ to 3’
  - Pink or white flowers
- **Short lived but self seeds**
- Blooms if flushes late spring - late summer, **trim back after blooming**
Gaillardia, Blanket Flower

- **Perennial**
- *Gaillardia x grandiflora*
- 1’-2’
- Short lived but self seed
- Grows wild
- Blooms all summer
Purple Heart
Setcreasea pallida

- Perennial
- Trailing, 1’ tall x 2’-3’ wide
- Purple leaves and small lavender flowers
Mexican Heather

- *Cuphea hyssopifolia*
- 1’-2’ tall and wide – some varieties smaller
- Can grow as annual or perennial
- Butterflies love it!
Lantana

- Many varieties!
- Some hardy, others not
  - Non hardy: Patriot, Blazing, Landmark
- **Lantana lace bug** a problem some years
  - Plants stop flowering, leaves turn pale, brown edges
  - Treat with **Merit**
‘Miss Huff’ Lantana

- Large grower, 4’-5’ x 4’-6’
- Long lived
- Excellent nectar source for butterflies
- Blooms mid-summer till frost – orange, yellow, pink flowers
More Hardy Lantanas

‘Radiation’ and ‘Dallas Red’, 3’ × 3’

‘Ham and Eggs’, 4’ × 5’
Low growing hardy lantanas

- ‘New Gold’, ‘Chapel Hill Gold’
  - 1’-2’ x 3’-4’
- ‘Lemon Drop’ = pale yellow form
- ‘Tangerine’ = light orange
- ‘Silver Mound’ = white with yellow eye
More low growing hardy lantanas

‘Red Spread’

‘Tangerine’

‘Spreading Sunset’

‘Silver Mound’
Mexican Bush Sage

- Perennial
- *Salvia leucantha*
- 4’ x 6’ tall and wide
- ‘Santa Barbara’
  - 3’ tall and wide
- Fall blooming
- Loves heat!
Knock Out™ Roses

- Hardy, disease resistant roses
- Flower throughout summer and fall if fertilized and watered
- 3’-5’ tall and wide
- Cut back hard each winter (to 18”)

Upcoming Classes

- **Gardening at the Beach 101**
  - May 15, 2pm – 4pm
  - Surf City Community Center
  - Call (910) 328-4887 to register

- **Growing Great Tomatoes**
  - March 24, 11:00 – 12:30, Poplar Grove Herb and Garden Fair, $5 admission – no registration
  - April 3, 10:30 – noon, Hampstead Library
  - April 14, 10:30 – noon, Burgaw Library
  - Call 259-1235 to register for 4/3 or 4/14
Gardening News by Email

**Pender Gardener** – regular updates about sustainable lawn and landscape care, great plants, and pest management

- **To Subscribe**: send an email to mj2@lists.ncsu.edu
  - Leave the subject line blank
  - In the body of the message put: subscribe pendergardener

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Master Gardener
Spring Plant Sale

Pender Extension Center
801 S. Walker St., Burgaw
Thurs, April 19, 2pm – 6pm
Fri, April 20, 8:30am – 6pm
Sat, April 21, 8:30am – Noon

• Many varieties of vegetables, herbs, annuals, perennials, blueberries, figs, and Knockout roses
Ask questions, bring samples for ID, soil test supplies, pick up information

- **Poplar Grove Farmer’s Market**, 2nd Wed of each month, April – October (9am – 1pm)
- **Hampstead Library**, 3rd Monday of each month, April - October (10:30am – 1pm)
- **Events**: Poplar Grove Herb Fair, Burgaw Springfest, Blueberry Festival . . .
- **Become a Master Gardener!**
  - Training begins in August! Contact Pender Coop. Extension
Pender County Cooperative Extension
801 S. Walker St., Burgaw
259-1235

Visit http://pender.ces.ncsu.edu to submit questions to our ‘Ask an Expert’ widget

Pender Gardener Blog:
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