Port Clarence Germplasm largeflower speargrass

Poa eminens

Selected Class Release "Natural"

Uses: Revegetation in Coastal Regions Alaska

Background Information

Largeflower speargrass is found along seashores in sandy places. Accordingly, another common name for this plant is salt bluegrass.

Largeflower speargrass is perennial, growing to a height of 1 meter (Hultén, 1968). Its leaves are broad, up to 10 mm. It has sharp-edged leaves and spear-like tips. As its common name implies, its flowers are large (9-24 cm long). With all these characteristics, *Poa eminens* can be identified in the wild.

It has thick rhizomes (horizontal underground roots), which provide winterhardiness and the ability to survive in windy, rainy conditions. If the soil around this grass is disturbed, the rhizomes spread vigorously.

Map from Hultén, 1968.
Used with the permission of Stanford University Press.

Distribution

Poa eminens can be found in all coastal regions of Alaska but the North Slope (Hultén, 1968). It is found in similar ecosystems in eastern Russia, Canada, China, and Asia. It is considered sub-arctic (Clayton et al., 2002).

Port Clarence Germplasm largeflower speargrass seed is maintained by the Alaska Plant Materials Center for commercial production.

Port Clarence Germplasm

Port Clarence Germplasm largeflower speargrass was collected at Port Clarence, Alaska, in 1995 (Wright, 2006).

This native grass is a Selected Class Release by the Alaska Plant Materials Center (PMC). This means it has been grown and harvested at the PMC and continues to preserve its excellent performance.

This grass is recommended for use in revegetation because its seedlings are vigorous and provide good initial plant cover.

Interesting Note:

The population of Port Clarence, near Nome, Alaska, averages about 12 residents, but is in constant fluctuation. It is the site of a Coast Guard Station designated as a Long Range Aids to Navigation (LORAN). Men and women stationed there are often transferred from one station to another.

Alaska Plant Materials Center
Serving Alaska's needs in production of Alaska native plants

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Port Clarence Germplasm largeflower speargrass

Port Clarence Germplasm largeflower speargrass for Alaska Revegetation Purposes

Port Clarence is ideal for revegetation seed mixes in sub-arctic coastal habitats. Its seedlings are vigorous and can grow in many conditions where other grasses and forbs cannot survive.

Port Clarence is suited for sandy, slightly saline, coastal revegetation. It provides habitat for many shorebirds.

***Poa eminens* seed ~668,833 seeds per pound**

***Port Clarence* in production at the Alaska Plant Materials Center, Palmer.**

Research on Poa eminens

Klebesadel (1994) did some experiments with *Poa eminens* and many other grasses at the Experimental Station in Palmer, Alaska.

He used the same treatments on all of the grasses. He found that if a high-nitrogen fertilizer was used, *Poa eminens* tended to lodge worse than any of the other grasses compared. At mid-season, though, this grass had the highest moisture content than the other grasses, making it very good for forage.

From this research, Klebasadel suggested the use of *Poa eminens* for forage and soil stabilization in saline conditions and coastal areas.

To Produce Port Clarence

Conventional farm equipment is needed. A drill for seeding at a depth of ~1/2 inch is recommended. Port Clarence grows well on a medium-wet, loamy soil.

Seedling vigor is fast and good. It grows best with irrigation, cultivation of weeds, and very little fertilization (Wright, 2005).

Seed can be harvested easily with normal equipment.

***Poa eminens* characteristics**	
Wetness Tolerance	**moderate**
Acidity Tolerance	**moderate**
Seedling Vigor	**good**
Yield Potential	**fair**
Longevity	**good**
Drought Resistance	**medium**
Winter Hardiness	**good**
Palatability	**good**

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