



Attu Germplasm longawn sedge

Carex macrochaeta

Selected Class Release “Natural”

Uses: Revegetation in Coastal Regions in Alaska

Background Information

Longawn sedge is perennial. It grows in wet places along the coast of Alaska—both in the mountains and along the shore.

As its common name implies, it has very long awns. These awns are located on the flowering scales. They are approximately 2 mm long (see diagram on next page).

This sedge has short, branching rhizomes sometimes with a yellowish brown fuzz. Plants with rhizomes tend to have a better chance of surviving windy, rainy conditions.



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

Distribution

Carex macrochaeta is very common in wet places along the coast in Alaska (Hultén, 1968). It is rare inland.

It grows in wet meadows, waterfall spray areas, sandy beaches, and bogs (Welsh, 1974). Its distribution follows the coast from Alaska to Oregon. It is also found in the Yukon and Asia.

Attu Germplasm longawn sedge seed is maintained by the Alaska Plant Materials Center for commercial production.

Attu Germplasm

Plant Identification Number: 9097723

Attu Germplasm longawn sedge was collected at Attu, Alaska in 1993 (Wright, 2006). Attu is an island in the Aleutians.

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

Interesting Note:

Longawn sedge is an important plant in the diet of bears, geese, and mountain goats.

According to a study of brown bears on the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge (Atwell, et al., 1980), single and family units of bears ate *Carex macrochaeta* as their primary food source while the sedge was young.

Another report (Fox, 1991) looked at the forage quality of *C. macrochaeta* in terms of its nutritional value. This report showed longawn sedge had very high nitrogen, low fiber, and high sodium values in new-growth shoots.

Both mountain goats and bears follow the emergence of the sedge as snow melts in the spring. Bears leave the high country once the young shoots become mature and no new ones appear (Atwell, et al., 1980).

Alaska Plant Materials Center

Serving Alaska's needs in production of Alaska native plants

Jan. 9, 2008



Attu Germplasm longawn sedge

Attu Germplasm longawn sedge for Alaska Revegetation Purposes

Attu is recommended for revegetating disturbed and eroded coastal grasslands. It can withstand cold temperatures, saline conditions, and very wet places.



Carex macrochaeta seed
~ 736,000 seeds per pound



To Produce Attu

Attu Germplasm longawn sedge is produced with traditional farm equipment. It needs a moist soil for establishment. Plant the seeds approximately 1/4 inch deep.

New seedlings have rapid seed germination and excellent seedling vigor. It takes two years for the crop to produce seed. Control of weeds and irrigation enable good field performance.

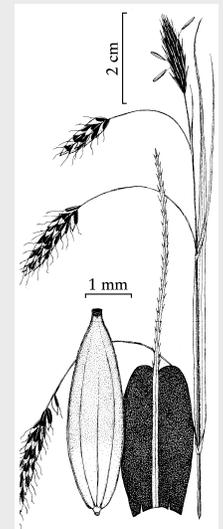
Seed can be harvested and cleaned easily with normal mechanical equipment.

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Attu Germplasm longawn sedge
in field production at the
Alaska Plant Materials Center, Palmer.

Line drawing showing plant form, awn shape, and perigynia of *Carex macrochaeta*.



Courtesy of the Flora of North America Association, artist Susan A. Reznicek

References

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