

Canavalia maritima Beach Bean, Bay Bean¹

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Introduction

Beach Bean is a dense ground cover that is commonly found in the coastal sands of south east Florida (Fig. 1). This plant forms a ground cover that is 6 to 12 inches in height but can occasionally be found climbing a small tree. The evergreen, trifoliate leaves have elliptic, 2 1/2- to 3 1/2-inch-long leaflets that are rounded at their apices. Small racemes of pink to purple flowers occur among these bright green leaves throughout the year. These beautiful flowers are followed by robust, woody pods.

General Information

Scientific name: *Canavalia maritima*

Pronunciation: kan-uh-VAL-ee-uh muh-RIT-tim-uh

Common name(s): Beach Bean, Bay Bean

Family: *Leguminosea*

Plant type: vine; ground cover

USDA hardiness zones: 10B through 11 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: native to Florida

Uses: cascading down a wall

Availability: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

Description

Height: depends upon supporting structure

Spread: depends upon supporting structure

Plant habit: prostrate (flat); spreading

Plant density: open

Growth rate: fast

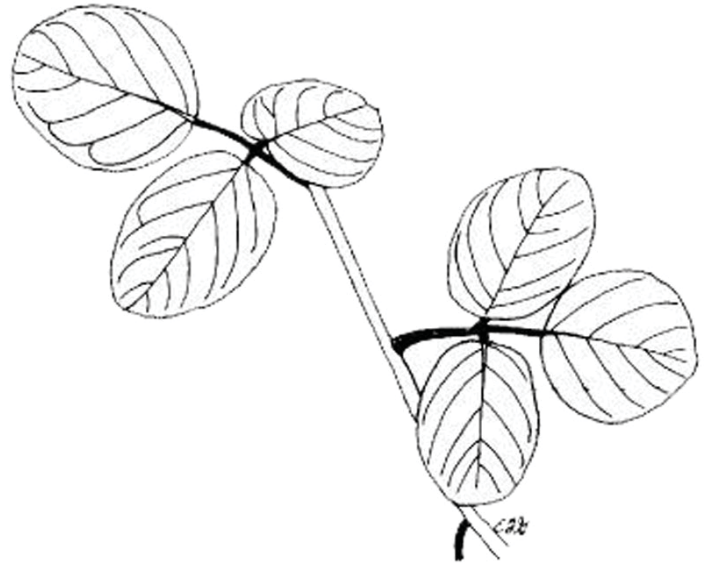


Figure 1. Beach Bean.

Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: trifoliate

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: elliptic (oval)

Leaf venation: brachidodrome; pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: purple

Flower characteristic: year-round flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: pod or pod-like

Fruit length: 3 to 6 inches

Fruit cover: dry or hard

Fruit color: brown

Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not applicable

Current year stem/twig color: not applicable

Current year stem/twig thickness: not applicable

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in full sun

Soil tolerances: acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam

Drought tolerance: high

Soil salt tolerances: good

Plant spacing: 24 to 36 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Pest resistance: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

Use and Management

This ground cover resists erosion by wind and light surf and is ideal for coastal landscapes. The bright green leaves and showy flowers of this plant are sure eye-catchers. It is a wonderful utility plant for stabilizing sandy soils and

makes a nice bed for trees and shrubs. It might climb up onto dense shrubs and the trunks of trees. This could be a maintenance problem for some landscapes.

Beach Bean, as the name implies, has a high drought and salt spray tolerance. It prefers well-drained soils and full sun exposures.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.