

Scaevola frutescens Scaevola, Beach Naupaka¹

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Introduction

This loosely rounded to spreading shrub is a robust grower that is commonly 3 to 10 feet tall with an equal spread. The shrubs form rounded clumps where they have been planted along the beaches of south Florida. It has fleshy, bright green leaves that are densely clustered at the tips of the branches. The inconspicuous, axillary flowers of this shrub are borne in clusters of 5 to 9 and occur throughout the year. The individual flowers are white, fragrant, and comprised of only half of a full corolla. The medium-sized fruits of this shrub are white, pithy berries.



Figure 1. Full Form—*Scaevola frutescens*: Scaevola, beach naupaka.
Credits: Edward F. Gilman, UF/IFAS



Figure 2. Full Form, Manicured—*Scaevola frutescens*: Scaevola, beach naupaka.
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Figure 3. Leaf and Flower—*Scaevola frutescens*: Scaevola, beach naupaka.
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Figure 4. Fruit—*Scaevola frutescens*: Scaevola, beach naupaka.
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General Information

Scientific name: *Scaevola frutescens*

Pronunciation: see-VOLE-luh froo-TESS-senz

Common name(s): scaevola, beach naupaka

Family: Goodeniaceae

Plant type: shrub

USDA hardiness zones: 10 through 11 (Figure 5)



Figure 5. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year-round

Origin: not native to North America

Invasive potential: potentially invasive

Uses: border; mass planting; foundation; small parking lot islands (< 100 square feet in size); medium-sized parking

lot islands (100–200 square feet in size); large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size); screen; superior hedge

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

Description

Height: 3 to 10 feet

Spread: 3 to 6 feet

Plant habit: round

Plant density: dense

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: spiral

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: revolute

Leaf shape: spatulate

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white

Flower characteristic: summer flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval

Fruit length: 0.5 to 1 inch

Fruit cover: fleshy

Fruit color: white

Fruit characteristic: showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not particularly showy; typically multi-trunked or clumping stems

Current year stem/twig color: green

Current year stem/twig thickness: very thick

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun

Soil tolerances: alkaline; sand; acidic; loam

Drought tolerance: high

Soil salt tolerances: good

Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: sprouts from roots or lower trunk

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding

Pest resistance: very sensitive to one or more pests or diseases which can affect plant health or aesthetics

Use and Management

Scaevola makes a great screen or hedge and is also useful as a tall ground cover along the beach. This plant is good for erosion control and may be used as an informal hedge or clipped hedge. It is suited for planting along a foundation if the soil drains well.

Scaevola will adapt to any soil and responds to irrigation and occasional fertilization with rapid growth. However, it also thrives on neglect. This shrub flourishes with high levels of sunshine and ocean spray, and it will grow well on marl land or on beach dunes. It has invaded some coastal locations adjacent to where it was planted. It becomes much larger than the native *Scaevola plumieri*.

The propagation of scaevola is accomplished by the use of cuttings.

Pests and Diseases

Chewing insects may be troublesome to scaevola, and mites may be a serious problem.