

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Dune Planting Guidelines

Sea oats (*Uniola paniculata*) and other dune plants found on Alabama beaches establish best if planted from nursery grown plants. We recommend using an anti-desiccant planting gel and slow release fertilizer with each nursery plant following these guidelines for the best results in restoring dunes in our area. Ideal seasons for planting are fall and spring, specifically, October and March. Occasionally, dune plants can be difficult to find, so plan on ordering ahead of time.

- Estimate the number of plants needed using 12"-18" spacing between each plant, 18" apart over a larger area using larger pot size, 12" apart on small restoration sites such as a berm using 2- to 4-inch pots.
- Plant in a random mix across the planting area using native beach species such as sea oats, seaside panicum, beach morning glory and seaside rosemary.
- Purchase plants from a reputable dune plant supplier and the materials needed for the gel and fertilizer.
- On planting day, prepare **Terra-sorb/fertilizer mix** (see below); allow about 30 minutes for the mixture to expand.
- Scoop out hole in sand deep enough to leave at least 1/3 of the green leaves exposed. For sea oats, this is about 8"-12"; for smaller herbaceous species, this is a more shallow hole.
- Add 6-8 oz of **Terra-sorb gel/fertilizer mix** to bottom of hole, 1-2 oz more for larger plants.
- Cover root wads with at least 2"-3" of wet sand.
- Fill in the remainder of the hole to cover the plant leaving about 1/3 of the green leaves exposed.

Terra-sorb gel/Fertilizer Mix

- Place about 8 oz of dry Terra-sorb gel into the bottom of a 5 gallon bucket.
- Fill bucket 2/3 to 3/4 full with water.
- Wait 20-30 minutes for the gel to fully expand, the mix looks like crushed ice when ready.
- If gel is too soupy after 20 minutes, add a little more gel and stir. Wait 20 more minutes before adding more gel to get the correct consistency.
- Once gel has fully expanded, add about 8 oz of a slow release fertilizer, such as Osmocote, at 19-6-12 NPK ratio. Mix well with your hand until the fertilizer is evenly distributed in the gel.

Success Criteria

Achieve a minimum survival rate of 80% over the restored area after a minimum one season of growth, preferably two seasons of growth. Survival is shown by plants above ground with white roots and vigorous rhizome below ground. Replace any of the nonviable plants to meet the 80% survival rate.

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