



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

*Tripsacum floridana*¹

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Introduction

Florida Tripsacum is an herbaceous perennial originating in South Florida that forms a dense, upright clump of 3-foot-long leaves (Fig. 1). These flat blades of grass grow from a short, thick, underground rhizome. Blades are noticeably more narrow than *Tripsacum dactyloides*. This grass attains a height of about 2 to 3 feet and spreads to form a clump up to 6-feet-wide. The flowers appear in somewhat showy spikes, with rust-colored anthers. These spikes appear in the spring and summer.

General Information

Scientific name: *Tripsacum floridana*

Pronunciation: trip-SAY-kum flor-rid-DAY-nuh

Common name(s): Florida Gamma Grass, Dwarf Fakahatchee Grass, Florida Tripsacum

Family: *Gramineae*

Plant type: herbaceous; ornamental grass

USDA hardiness zones: 8 through 11 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 8: year round

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: native to Florida

Uses: accent; border; mass planting; container or above-ground planter

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the plant

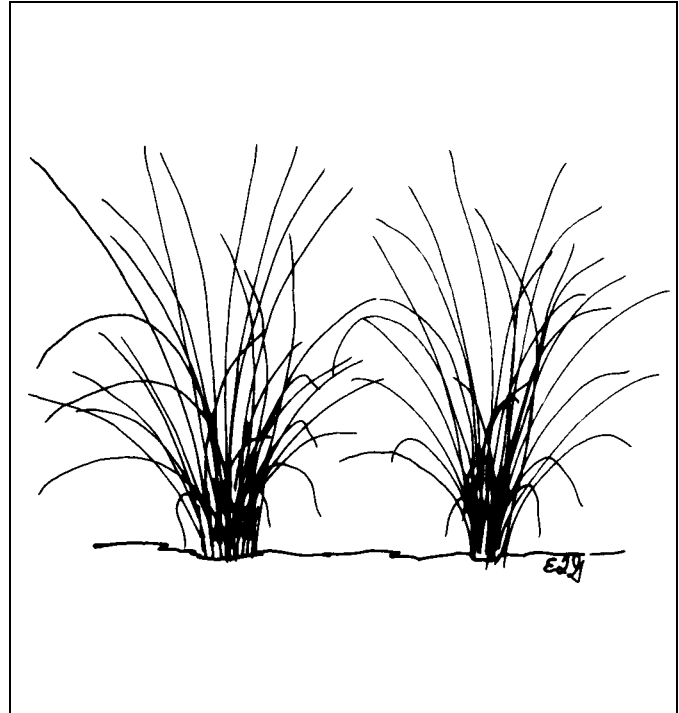


Figure 1. Florida Gamma Grass.

Description

Height: 3 to 4 feet

Spread: 4 to 6 feet

Plant habit: round

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: fine

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: most emerge from the soil, usually without a stem

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: linear

Leaf venation: parallel

Leaf type and persistence: semi-evergreen; evergreen

Leaf blade length: 18 to 36 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: yellow

Flower characteristic: spring flowering; summer flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: elongated

Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches

Fruit cover: dry or hard

Fruit color: unknown

Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: typically multi-trunked or clumping stems

Current year stem/twig color: not applicable

Current year stem/twig thickness: not applicable

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun

Soil tolerances: extended flooding; acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; loam; clay;

Drought tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerances: moderate

Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding plant: plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

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

Use and Management

Florida *Tripsacum* has proven to be an outstanding landscape plant and may be used as an accent in ground cover beds. It is also useful to stabilize banks and steep slopes. This grass may also create a nice edging along streams and ponds. The adaptability of Florida *Tripsacum* makes it well suited for planting in water retention and detention areas. These areas are often wet or inundated for a period of time, then become very dry.

Florida *Tripsacum* needs a full sun or light shade position in the landscape and adapts to dense and light soils. It is tolerant of wet soil conditions but is also quite drought tolerant. It is one of the most shade tolerant grasses, and naturalizes readily in a moist site. It is listed as an endangered plant in Florida.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.