

## WOODY PLANT SELECTION FOR COASTAL MARITIME RIDGE RESTORATION AND REVEGETATION

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USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service Plant Materials Program is committed to finding innovative and adaptive vegetative strategies to protect resource concerns. The Golden Meadow Plant Materials Center in Galliano, LA focuses on Critical Area Stabilization of coastal habitats including coastal marshes and estuaries. Coastal restoration is a key concern in Louisiana as the state experiences more coastal land loss than any other in the US.

Coastal restoration is challenging because human activities force the imitation of natural successional processes. This presents its own challenge as succession varies from region to region and is on a projected, possibly generational timescale. The ultimate goal of coastal restoration is to get degraded environments to a state as close to natural as possible. Each project presents a chance to learn what steps need to be taken for a system to balance itself and reach an artificial equilibrium.

Port Fourchon, LA has been rapidly developing over the last 20 years. As it has developed its port facility, it has provided the dredge material for the necessary mitigation to the surrounding marshes. One project involved the use of dredged material in the restoration of a maritime forest ridge. This presented an opportunity to identify native woody species useful in the revegetation of constructed ridges from dredged material. Dredged material can become colonized by native plants over an extended period of time. The goal of the study was to identify native woody species that could tolerate variable soil conditions and maintain the integrity of the constructed coastal ridge to accelerate revegetation and control erosion.

PRESENTER BIO: Dan is the farm foreman at the Golden Meadow Plant Material Center going into his third year. He received his BS Biological Sciences from Georgia State University and is working on his MS Integrative Biology from Kennesaw State University. His graduate experience is in coastal dune grasses and invasive species.

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