

# Marsh Notes

Finding Vegetative  
Solutions for  
Conservation  
Problems



USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service - Golden Meadow Plant Materials Center

## Making Art with Plants and People

Kokedama (Japanese for “moss ball”) in your landscape is a project by Megan Singleton inspired by her desire to create art through interaction and spread information about Louisiana’s native plants using the Japanese Bonsai method of containing plants into small moss balls, a technique known as Kokedama. At interactive events scheduled throughout the country, installations of hanging plants covered in moss and handmade paper were created using site-specific flora. At the events, viewers were invited to become participants, by cutting down plants and taking them back into their landscape. In return, she has asked for an image of the plant in its new home and the GPS coordinates of the location, which will in turn be mapped and documented on her web site. Meagan’s event took place in New Orleans, Louisiana. She visited the Golden Meadow Plant Materials Center prior to her event and was fascinated with plants used to protect Louisiana’s coast. The PMC provided her with native plants for her New Orleans showing. For this particular event, she constructed 27 hanging Kokedama containing native Louisiana plants used in coastal and forest restoration projects.



Photo taken by: Megan Singleton

Edited from: Singleton, M. (n.d.). Kokedama in your landscape. Retrieved August 29, 2014, from <http://www.megansingleton.com>



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### Green Facts

“Wisdom is not a product of schooling but of the lifelong attempt to acquire it.”

Albert Einstein

### PMC Staff

Garret Thomassie,  
PMC Manager  
[garret.thomassie@la.usda.gov](mailto:garret.thomassie@la.usda.gov)

Curt J. Riche’  
Soil Conservationist

Alexis Luke  
Program Assistant

Answer to Spring 2014 PMC Veg  
Quiz:  
Butterweed  
*Packera glabella* (Poir.)  
C. Jeffery Show

### PMC VEG QUIZ

Can you identify this native species?



Answer in next publication



## The Mission of the NRCS Plant Materials Program:

We develop and transfer plant materials and plant technology for the conservation of natural resources. In working with a broad range of plant species, including grasses, forbs, trees, and shrubs, the program seeks to address priority needs of field offices and land managers in both public and private sectors. Emphasis is focused on using native plants as a sustainable way to solve conservation problems and protect ecosystems.

If you would like more information call us at (985) 475-5280 or visit our web site at <http://www.plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/lapmc>

## Technical Assistance Provided to Local Levee District

The Golden Meadow Plant Materials Center provided assistance to the Terrebonne Levee District in regards to the Morganza to the Gulf Hurricane Protection Project in Terrebonne parish, LA. Un-vegetated soil on slopes receiving excessive rainfall events are very vulnerable to soil erosion. The PMC suggested trying to establish perennial types of grasses that are drought and salt tolerant, because these soils are “tricky” when establishing vegetation due to variants in soil texture, fertility, salinity and pHs. Material used to construct most hurricane levees is dredged, hence there are rarely any consistencies in soil type. Usually, there is never any one solution to remedy the problems encountered when establishing vegetation. Timing of seeding is critical for successful establishment. Soil moisture and seed placement are also very important factors when vegetating levee systems. The PMC installed two small demos, using Seashore paspalum plugs, along the levee and will be monitored for survival and plant vigor to serve as another recommended vegetative species.

## 2014 Coastal Resources Meeting

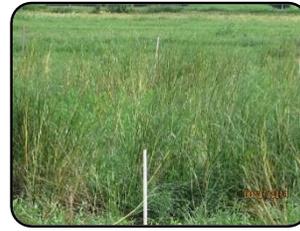
The Louisiana Association of Conservation Districts’ Coastal Resources Committee held their annual meeting at Docville Farm in St. Bernard Parish on June 5 – 6, 2014. The Plant Materials center was amongst the many who attended this meeting. A field trip was held on June 5<sup>th</sup> showcasing successful projects like the Louisiana Department

of Agriculture and Forestry’s floating island project along



Bayou Bienvenue and the Inner Harbor Navigation Channel Surge Barrier. On June 6<sup>th</sup>, information was provided on a variety of topics including the Caernarvon Diversion structure and the history and closure of the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet. Kevin Norton, State Conservationist for Louisiana, gave an update on current NRCS activities and Britt Paul, Assistant State Conservationist for Water Resources gave an update of current Coastal Wetland Planning and Protection Restoration Act activities.

## Herbivory Is No Laughing Matter



Since released in 1989, the center has produced hundreds of thousands of ‘Vermilion’ smooth cordgrass plants annually, until the summer of 2014. Initially we were led to believe that the slowly developing grass was a result of a very long and cold winter in south Louisiana. In the spring of each year PMC staff routinely begin fertilizing the smooth cordgrass with an all-around fertilizer to stimulate root and shoot development. By summer, the plants are expected to have reached maturity for the distribution to eligible growers for commercial production. This year things were not unfolding like they normally do in terms of smooth cordgrass production. While trying other conventional management strategies, stems of smooth cordgrass were noticed floating in all areas of the pond. We then identified the culprit of the problem being nutria, as they are in elevated populations in the surrounding area. Smooth cordgrass spreads primarily by vegetative propagation, producing new above ground biomass from an extensive underground system of rhizomes. As the new above ground biomass began to grow, nutria were clipping the tender vegetation resulting in the plant to lodge then ultimately to die or float off.

As soon as the problem was identified, a barrier fence was immediately constructed around the foundation plot. After a few weeks of protection, new biomass began to emerge from the soil surface prolifically. Despite being delayed in maturity for this time of year, it appears the pond will rebound and the production of smooth cordgrass will be ready for commercial distribution.

## The Art of Rotor Tilling

The summer of 2014 in southeastern Louisiana has been quite typical, receiving high temperatures and bi-monthly rainfall. Unlike previous years, where excessive rainfall interrupted field maintenance, PMC staff were able to spend ample time controlling weeds and performing normal field maintenance duties. Ponds consisting in approximately one acre in size were leveled and cleaned during the year. Water levels in ponds and dryness can be controlled due to the capabilities of flooding and draining.



Slope and drainage direction of the fields are imperative in these regards. The ponds house many coastal vegetative plants for coastal restoration projects that are inevitably growing in southern Louisiana.

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