



Bayou Lafourche Germplasm

California bulrush

Schoenoplectus californicus (C.A. Mey.) Palla

Bayou Lafourche Germplasm California bulrush [*Schoenoplectus californicus* (C.A. Mey.) Palla] is a selected class release from the USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in 2007.

Description

Bayou Lafourche Germplasm California bulrush is a native, herbaceous, rhizomatous perennial that forms dense vegetative colonies along shorelines, in open shallow waters, or on mudflats. It is an emergent wetland plant that spreads primarily by vegetative propagation, producing new stems from an extensive system of underground rhizomes. Bayou Lafourche Germplasm was selected for its plant vigor, height, stem density and diameter. Plant height ranges from 5 to 10 feet and can grow in relatively deep water (i.e. ≤ 36 inches).

Source

Bayou Lafourche Germplasm California bulrush was collected in 1998 from a native stand in Lafourche Parish, Louisiana located near the town of Golden Meadow (MLRA 150). It is one of 48 collections selected from Louisiana and southeast Texas. It was selected based on vigor, height, stem density and stem width, ranking above average in all categories. Bayou Lafourche Germplasm was collected on a Schriever clay (Sk) soil type where the average depth of water is 12 inches with inter-tidal influence.

Conservation Uses

Erosion control: Bayou Lafourche Germplasm California bulrush is used to effectively control shoreline erosion along bayous, levee banks, canal banks and other soil-water interfaces. Additionally, this species will form a vegetative barrier across open water reducing wave energy impacting shorelines permitting other aquatic plants to grow in an otherwise unfavorable environment (NRCS, LSU 2000). Bayou Lafourche Germplasm California bulrush is being used extensively in marsh restoration.

Wildlife: Bayou Lafourche Germplasm California bulrush produces seed that is used as a food source for ducks and numerous marsh and shore birds. Erect stems both under and on top of water provide habitat, cover and nesting areas for many marsh species as well.

Area of Adaptation and Use

Bayou Lafourche Germplasm California bulrush is well adapted to freshwater and slight to moderate levels of salinity (less than 3.5 parts per thousand) (Everett 1994). It has performed well in field tests and is anticipated to be broadly adapted for use in southern and central portions of Louisiana, southeastern Texas and southern Mississippi. This release is adapted to a wide range of soils from coarse sands to clays and mucks, and will tolerate fluctuating water levels. For a current distribution map, please consult the Plant Profile page for this species on the [PLANTS Website](#).

Establishment and Management for Conservation Plantings

Bayou Lafourche Germplasm California bulrush can be successfully established using container grown or bare root plant stock. Transplants should be planted as soon as possible in moist soil to avoid the plant's roots from drying out. The



Figure 1. Photo of Bayou Lafourche Germplasm California bulrush foundation field at the Golden Meadow Plant Materials Center

presence of a well-developed root mass and growing buds are critical to transplant survival. Transplants can be planted at water depths ranging from 1 to 24 inches, with an optimum planting depth of about 12 inches. Plants are normally planted on 5 foot centers, but spacing can vary according to desired coverage area. Under typical site conditions 2 rows planted 10 feet apart will provide adequate coverage. Plants within the 2 rows should be staggered on centers in order for the plants to alternate between spaces. It is not uncommon for plants to spread 8 to 10 feet in a growing season. Planting sites where high wave energy is a problem may require the addition of plant anchors. Transplants should remain erect and should not be completely submerged after planting.

Understanding site hydrology is important for managing stands of California bulrush. Bayou Lafourche Germplasm is a freshwater plant species with slight to moderate levels of salt tolerance. It will tolerate fluctuating water levels of salinity, but prolonged and elevated levels of salinity, poor water circulation, and high water temperatures can affect overall plant health and vigor.

Ecological Considerations

Bayou Lafourche Germplasm California bulrush is a naturally occurring species in Louisiana and adjoining states and therefore would not constitute an introduction of an exotic species into local ecosystems. Any negative impacts on other native plant species would likely be minimal to non-existent.

Seed and Plant Production

Bayou Lafourche Germplasm California bulrush is a clonal release and must be propagated vegetatively; seed is not available. Divisions of stems and roots from established mature plants is how the plant is propagated. Container grown or bare rooted plugs can vegetatively be propagated year round, however, better results are achieved by planting mid-winter to early spring.

Availability

For conservation use: Bayou Lafourche Germplasm California bulrush are available through commercial wetland plant growers.

For seed or plant increase: Bayou Lafourche Germplasm California bulrush foundation stock is available for commercial nursery production from the USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Golden Meadow Plant Materials Center. Seed of this release is not available and is not to be used for plant increase or establishment.

For more information, contact:

Golden Meadow Plant Materials Center

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<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/plantmaterials/pmc/southeast/lapmc/>



Citation

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Everett. W. H. 1994. Species Guides for Wetland Plantings in Southeast United States. USDA-NRCS.

USDA-NRCS and LSU AgCenter, 2000. Plant Guide, *Schoenoplectus californicus*, California bulrush, Golden Meadow Plant Materials Center, Galliano, LA.

For additional information about this and other plants, please contact your local USDA Service Center, NRCS field office, or Conservation District <<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>>, and visit the PLANTS Web site <<http://plants.usda.gov>> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <<http://www.plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>

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