Weeping Love Grass Suitable For Dry Garden

THE PLANT DOCTOR

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Extension Area Turf Specialist

Dear Plant Doctor: Believe it or not. I would like to know where I can purchase (or how to propagate) a type of grass I see that grows along highways, like the steep slopes on I-40 where the soil can easily erode.

This grass is very bushy, clumpy looking and I assume it is native. I would like a bunch of it to provide cover in my "wildlife backyard" but do not want to poach any from the highways.

What is this grass and where can I purchase it?

Answer: I believe the grass to which you are referring to is called Weeping love grass (*Eragrostris curvula*). This native African grass was introduced years ago for vegetation of hot, dry infertile sites for erosion control. Seeded extensively by the N.C. Department of Transportation on steep slopes, this perennial bunch-type grass can be propagated by seed or division. Weeping love grass has also found a home on golf courses, parks and in low maintenance landscapes.

Regular mowing will kill Weeping love grass. Old foliage may be removed by mowing in the early spring by using the highest mowing height. I have observed that older stands (5-plus years) of Weeping love grass tend to become very clumpy and prone to woody plant invasion.

The inflorescence (seed head) is presently visible on plantings of Weeping love grass throughout most of the coastal Carolinas. Prolific quantities of seed are produced and natural reseeding is quite common. Weeping love grass rarely develops into a weed problem in established turf grass because routine mowing and fertilization kills the developing plants. Fertilization of established stands encourages weedy grass invasion and is not usually recommended.

Do not poach this grass from the highway shoulders.

Seeding rates for Weeping love grass usually range from 5 to 25 pounds of seeds per acre. Seed can be ordered or obtained by most large seed suppliers.

This is a wonderful ornamental grass for non-irrigated, dry, low maintenance gardens.

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L.T. Lucas, Ph.D., a turf grass plant pathologist at N.C. State University, recently told me that he had been seeing a great deal of problems on centipede grass. Even though we experienced a very mild winter, many centipede grass lawns are showing symptoms of winter injury, centipede grass decline, overfertilization and other, as of yet, unidentified disease problems. Most of these problems occur because of improper maintenance and fertilization practices.

Centipede grass prefers acid soils (pH 5.5), low soil fertility and a mowing height of 1 to 1.5 inches. The annual application of a low amount of slow release nitrogen, low phosphorus, high potassium fertilizer (like 10 pounds 5-5-15 per 1,000 square feet or equivalent), or equivalent in May or June provides all the needed nutrients for adequate centipede grass growth. Heavy thatch accumulation indicates that excessive fertilization practices are being used which will make the grass more susceptible to winter injury and other centipede grass problems.

Centipede grass is also susceptible to yellowing in the spring that is often due to iron deficiency or poor root development. The application of a soluble form of iron (like chelated iron) will usually correct this problem.

I have two excellent publications on centipede grass lawn care titled *Problems of Centipedegrass, Turfgrass Diseases Information Note No. 1*, by L.T. Lucas, and the *Centipedegrass Lawn Maintenance Calendar*, AG-381. These publications can be obtained free of charge at your local N.C. Cooperative Extension office or by sending a SASE to me.

Send your gardening questions or comments to The Plant Doctor, P. O. Box 109, Bolivia, N.C. 28422.

CHOLESTEROL SCREENING

There will be a cholesterol screening and general health risk profile offered at Wal-Mart, Shallotte, NC, on May 28 and 29 from 9 a.m. -6 p.m. There is no fasting required for the total cholesterol and the cost is only $7. Other packages include (1) Chol, HDL (the good cholesterol), and Risk Ratio for only $16. (2) Chol. HDL, LDL, Triglycerides and Risk Ratio for $22 (fasting or non-fasting). The new, accurate Kodak analyzer is being used.

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South Brunswick Middle Announces Honor Roll

The fifth grading period honor roll has been announced at South Brunswick Middle School at Boiling Spring Lakes for fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth graders.

Member of the A-Team who earned all A's and S's include sixth graders Stephanie Bingham, Erin Bradley, Miriam Coles, Crista Collins, Tiffany English, David Harris, Megan Jeans, Tiffany Lewis, Karla Pollard and Marissa Sizemore. Seventh graders are Brandy Biedell, Larry Brock, Leslie Myrie, Mary Sillings and Shannon Smith.

Honor Roll members who earned only A's and B's and S's are as follows:

A/B Honor Roll

Sixth Grade: Jeremy Alltop, Billie Barfield, Dara Beeson, Veronica Bellamy, Keith Bowling, Kendra Brookins, Prince Bryant, Christina Camp, Kelly Chesnutt, Hakim Clemmons, Zachary Collier, Joshua Cumbee, B.J. Eversole, Sonia Ford, Denotra Franks, Steven Guadagno, Courtney Harrelson, Jonathan Hayes, Melissa Hines, Amanda Huggins, Larry Johnson, Weston Knox, Jennifer Lange, Corey Lastinger, Robert Lastinger, Melinda Laughren, Steven Lowery, Jennifer McLean, Cynthia Oldham, Sara Pierce, Ashely Reaves, Keeley Rogers, Joy Rose, Bradley Shrader, Santresa Sloop, Jeremy Small, Alisha Spencer, Candice White and Elizabeth Wosczyna.

Seventh Grade: Jennifer Brown, Melissa Ciemnicki, Joy Flanagan, Douglas Fritchey, Derrick Fullwood, Charles Herzog, Jamye Hickman, Margo Karriker, Noel Kaufhold, Patricia King, Margaret Lineberger, Maksim Malik, James May, Chadwick Modlin, Shane Oxford, Carlon Parker, Marie Pierce, Nekesha Randolph, Shawn Sedelmeyer, Jeffrey Sellers, Kelly Shatterly, William Shaver, Edward Tharp, Princeton Wallace, Frederick Watkins and Joshua Young.

Eighth grade: Jeremy Baker, Rashida Barbour, Byron Batson, Crystal Bazen, Gary Bines, Charles Bridges, Brian Chism, Matthew Collin, Lori Dennis, Bianca Dishman, Kelly Falor, Christy Gainvors, Kristoffer Greeson, Shannon Hansen, Kelly Hardee, Faith Hayes, Jon Helms, Joshua Hocken, Leaf Hoy, Jaime Kosiewska, Jamie Lewis, Jessica Lichty, William Limer, Crystal Long, Clinton Love, Rosalyn McDowell, Tenelya Moore, Patrick Mullis, Tera Newman, Amy Owen, Jeremy Pittman, Zhenya Ramphal, David Small, Jissica Tharp and Catherine Wosczyna.

ENTERTAINMENT BRIEFS

Sun Fun Fest Coming June 3

The 41st annual Sun Fun Festival will be held in Myrtle Beach, S.C., June 3 through 8, dedicated to the Myrtle Beach Air Force Base that is scheduled to close in March 1993.

An open house and air show will kick off festivities at 12:30 p.m. June 3, with aerial demonstrations by the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds and the U.S. Army Golden Knights precision parachute team.

Events scheduled for the remaining days include the Miss Sun Fun Pageant, Miss Bikini Wahine Contest, the Sun Fun parade, bubble gum blowing contests, the Kids' Fair in Murrells Inlet, the Sun Fun Beach Run in North Myrtle Beach and Jazz in the Park, to name a few.

Film and television star Jan-Michael Vincent and Olympic skier A.J. Kitt will appear at many of these events.

For more information about the festival, call the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce, 800-356-3016, Ext. 132.

Orchestra Sets Season

The Wilmington Symphony Orchestra's 1992-93 season will feature five subscription concerts, with season ticket prices ranging from $32 to $50.

Marcus Thompson will present a viola concert with the orchestra Oct. 3 in Kenan Auditorium on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, followed by a performance of *The Nutcracker* by soprano Lori White Nov. 24 in Thalian Hall.

The traditional "Walk-In" *Messiah* holiday concert will be presented Dec. 7 in Kenan Auditorium, where student concerto winners will perform classics and pops in a Feb. 20 concert. The season finale will be a guitar concert by Rob Nathanson in Kenan Auditorium May 1. All concerts are at 8 p.m.

A regular subscription ticket to the series may be purchased for $40, reduced to $32 for students and senior citizens. A parent subscription for $50 will admit one adult and accompanying children. For more information or to order tickets, call 919-791-9262.

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Prices in this ad good Wednesday, May 27 thru Tuesday, June 2, 1992.