

# *Verbena maritima* Beach Verbena<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

This native verbena is well suited for along the coastal areas of Florida but is now in danger of extinction in the wild. Its tolerance to salt air and water makes it a great perennial dune stabilizer. It adds color to the ground year-round. Purple or lavender flowers borne in clusters at the top of this 12-inch-tall ground cover stand out against the fine-textured foliage. Stems creep along the ground and root to bind the sand together. Sand builds up around the stems and foliage, helping prevent wind from blowing it back from the beach.



Figure 1. Full Form—*Verbena maritima*: Beach verbena.  
Credits: Edward F. Gilman, UF/IFAS



Figure 2. Leaf—*Verbena maritima*: Beach verbena.  
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Figure 3. Flower—*Verbena maritima*: Beach verbena.  
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## General Information

**Scientific name:** *Verbena maritima*

**Pronunciation:** ver-BEEN-nuh muh-RIT-tim-muh

**Common name(s):** beach verbena

**Family:** *Verbenaceae*

**Plant type:** ground cover; perennial; annual

**USDA hardiness zones:** 10 through 11 (Figure 4)

**Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** Feb; Mar; Apr; May; Jun; Jul; Aug; Sep; Oct; Nov; Dec

**Origin:** native to Florida

**Invasive potential:** aggressive, spreading plant

**Uses:** ground cover; attracts butterflies; mass planting; naturalizing; container or above-ground planter

**Availability:** grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries



Figure 4. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

## Description

**Height:** 0.5 to 1 feet

**Spread:** 3 to 5 feet

**Plant habit:** spreading

**Plant density:** moderate

**Growth rate:** moderate

**Texture:** fine

## Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** opposite/subopposite

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** lobed

**Leaf shape:** ovate

**Leaf venation:** bowed; pinnate

**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen

**Leaf blade length:** less than 2 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** no fall color change

**Fall characteristic:** not applicable

## Flower

**Flower color:** purple; lavender

**Flower characteristic:** year-round flowering

## Fruit

**Fruit shape:** unknown

**Fruit length:** unknown

**Fruit cover:** unknown

**Fruit color:** unknown

**Fruit characteristic:** inconspicuous and not showy

## Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** not applicable

**Current year stem/twig color:** green

**Current year stem/twig thickness:** thin

## Culture

**Light requirement:** plant grows in full sun

**Soil tolerances:** acidic; alkaline; sand; loam; clay

**Drought tolerance:** high

**Soil salt tolerances:** moderate

**Plant spacing:** 36 to 60 inches

## Other

**Roots:** not applicable

**Winter interest:** plant has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers

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

**Invasive potential:** aggressive, spreading plant

**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

## Use and Management

To establish a solid ground cover, plant about 4 feet apart. Stems creep along the soil and plants will form a complete cover 18 to 24 months after planting. Plant in the full sun for fastest growth and best flowering. Foliage remains dark green with little or no care once plants are established. Although the plant is native to beaches, it should perform well in dry, inland landscapes in full sun.

## Pests and Diseases

Few problems should impact this native verbena, provided it is not irrigated too much.