

Growing Your Own Sweetgrass

Sweetgrass is a sturdy plant that can thrive in Lowcountry yards and gardens. You can grow sweetgrass from seed, or you can purchase potted sweetgrass from local nurseries. Your sweetgrass plants will produce great “threads” for basket making if you follow these instructions:

If you’re growing your own sweetgrass from seed:

- In late November, collect mature seeds that are almost ready to fall off the plant. Or, you may be able to purchase seeds.
- Plant each seed shallowly in a small pot with soilless potting media such as peat, vermiculite, or perlite.
- Place potted seeds in a warm, sunny location.
- Seeds should emerge in a week or so, and they’ll be ready to transplant outdoors in about 3 months.

If you’re purchasing sweetgrass plants from a nursery:

- See the next page.

When you’re putting your sweetgrass into the ground:

- Choose a location that is dry, sunny, and free of other plants. Sandy soil where nothing else grows works best.
- Put your sweetgrass into the ground in early spring.
- During the first year, water your sweetgrass during dry periods.
- After the first year, your sweetgrass only needs rain.
- Never fertilize sweetgrass that will be used for basketry.
- Once your sweetgrass is mature, “pull” it regularly or trim it back to promote new growth next year.
- Mature plants can be separated into “clumps” of new plants.
- Your sweetgrass should live for around 5 years!

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If you're purchasing sweetgrass plants from a nursery:

- Make sure that the grass you're buying is the correct species. Ask for *Muhlenbergia filipes* or *Muhlenbergia capillaris*.
- Potted sweetgrass plants may have a strange texture or appearance because they've been fertilized and overwatered. The plants will grow out of this once they're established in your yard or garden.
- Below is a list of nurseries in the Charleston, SC area that sell sweetgrass:

- Abide-A-While Nursery and Garden Center Inc.
1460 N. Hwy. 17 Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464
(843) 884-9738
- Beauty Unlimited Nursery and Landscape Co.
3539 McLeod Mill Rd. Johns Island, SC 29455
(843) 763-7335
- Cross Seed Co. Inc.
840 St. Andrews Blvd. Charleston, SC 29407
(843) 766-1687
- Growing Places Inc.
886 Whipple Rd. Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464
(843) 881-2277
- Legare Farms, Inc.
2442 Hanscombe Pt. Rd. Johns Island, SC 29455
(843) 559-0763
- Palm Trees and Garden Center of South Carolina Inc.
2175 N. Hwy. 17 Mt. Pleasant, SC 29466
(843) 216-9700
- Sweetgrass Growers
3416 Plowground Rd. Johns Island, SC 29455
(843) 559-2429

For additional copies of these instructions, use the Internet to visit
http://www.cofc.edu/sustainability/nativespecies_sweetgrass.htm