LSU AgCenter Coastal Plants Program

LSU AgCenter Research & Extension

The LSU AgCenter's Coastal Plants Program is developing improved native plant varieties, production methods and delivery systems and technologies to advance plant restoration technology. Incorporation of numerous improved varieties is essential to mimic natural plant populations. Efficient and economical plant production methods are needed to enable large-scale production of native plants needed for coastal restoration. Improved delivery systems and technology will allow large-scale planting of coastal wetlands with minimal effort and cost.

We are the nation's only program developing improved plant varieties for coastal wetland restoration and are on the forefront of plant restoration technologies

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The most recent United States Geological Survey of land loss found that Louisiana loses an area of land the size of a football field every hour. This is the highest erosion rate of any state in the continental United States. These startling figures demonstrate the urgent need to improve coastal restoration technologies.

Engineering technology for restoring coastal Louisiana has made significant advancements in the last 30 years, while plant technology has not. Many restored sites rely on natural establishment of plant vegetation despite evidence that restored sites in Louisiana can erode before plants naturally establish.

To advance plant technologies for coastal restoration, the LSU AgCenter developed the Coastal Plants Program in 1998. This program is a multi-disciplinary team of plant breeders, geneticists, plant biotechnologists, molecular biologists, soil scientists, seed biologists, plant pathologists, weed scientists, wetland ecologists, and agricultural engineers. It partnered with federal, state, and non-profit agencies and wetland plant producers to develop innovative plant remediation and restoration techniques that mimic natural wetlands better than current practices.

The main focus of the Coastal Plants Program is to use traditional plant breeding and agricultural biotechnology techniques to develop improved native plant varieties for coastal restoration. It has expanded in recent years to investigate production practices and delivery systems. Large scale production that maximizes yields of native plants is needed to economically supply material for restoration projects. Improved delivery systems, such as aerial seed applications, will allow the economical completion of large scale plantings. Delivery technologies that improve seed properties, such as seed coatings that enhance seed germination, seedling survival, and planting precision, are essential to the success and efficiency of seeded material in harsh wetland environments.

The LSU AgCenter's Coastal Plants Program is the only program in the nation developing improved plant varieties for coastal wetland restoration and is on the forefront of plant restoration technologies. Anyone interested in potential partnerships, collaborative agreements or other participation in the LSU AgCenter Coastal Plants Program may contact **Dr. Carrie Knott, cknott@agcenter.lsu.edu.**

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