

## Lyme grass

### *Leymus arenarius*

#### Description

The species appears to be spreading following the lowering of Lake Michigan water levels; it invades beaches, dunes and other sites with sandy soils; stabilizes dunes, eliminating the shifting sands that are home to rare species such as Pitchers thistle (*Cirsium pitcheri*).

#### Habit

Perennial grass, stout, erect, growing from creeping rhizomes or in tufts, 0.5-1.5 m (1.5-5 ft) tall.

#### Leaves

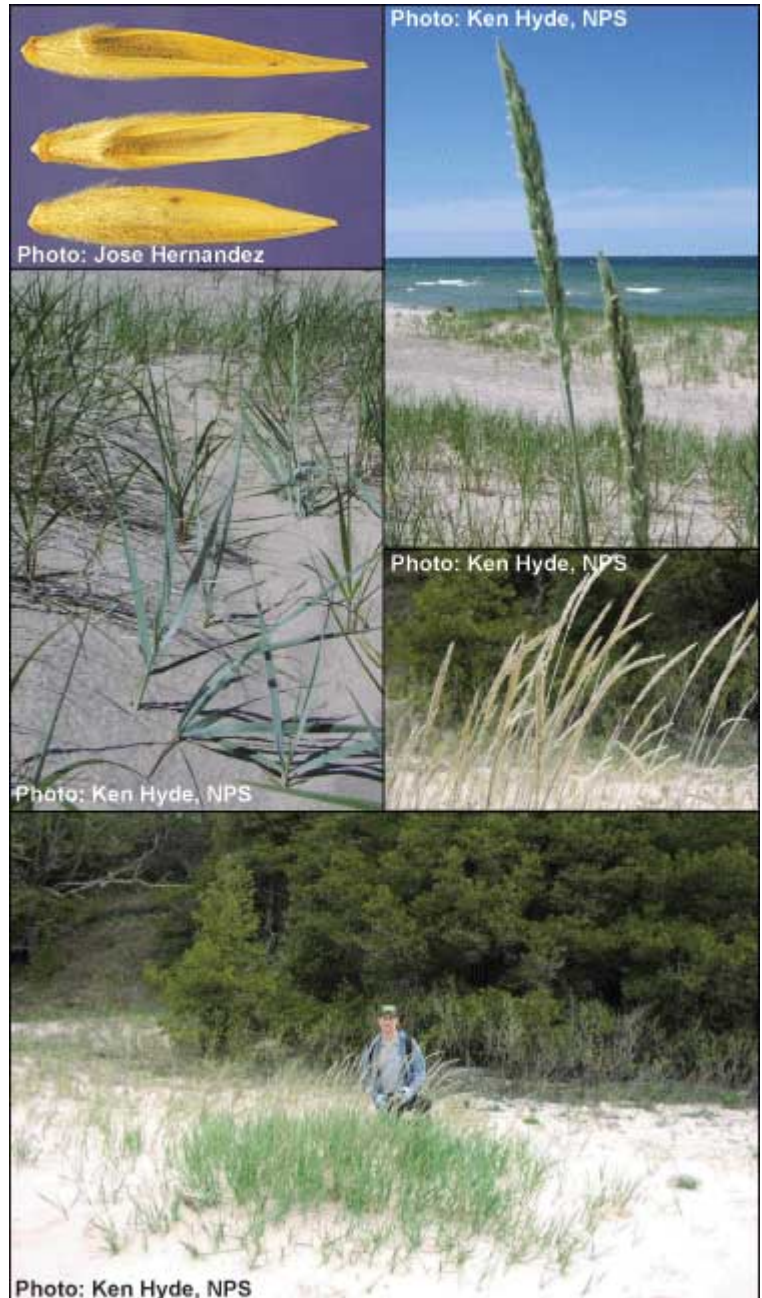
Blue-glaucous, 6-15 mm wide, sheaths crowded at base, ligule barely 1 mm long.

#### Stems

Blue-glaucous, hairless or nearly so at the summit.

#### Flowers

Arranged in a spike with 4-6 flowered spikelets





usually paired at the nodes on spike.

### **Fruits and Seeds**

Arranged in a spike, 15-25 mm thick.

### **Habitat**

Native to Europe. It was introduced locally around the Great Lakes; thrives on calcium-rich sands; shade-intolerant; drought-tolerant; invasive on beaches and dunes.

### **Reproduction**

Primarily vegetative, spreading via its creeping rhizomes; may also reproduce by seed.

### **Similar**

Native thick-spike wheat grass (*Agropyron dasystachyum*) is also blue-green but its spikes are only 5-10 mm thick; beach grass (*Ammophila breviligulata*) is green rather than bluish; reed grass (*Calamovilfa longifolia*) has a open panicle rather than a spike; American dunegrass (*Leymus mollis*) is greener and finely hairy under the spike, while Lyme-grass is bluer and its stems are hairless almost to the top. A dichotomous key or consultation with an expert should be used to distinguish between these species as several are rare.

### **Monitoring and Rapid Response**

Monitor beaches and dunes adjacent to sites where this species has been used for landscaping. Lyme-grass can sprout from rhizomes and root fragments mechanical removal is not recommended; may be treated with herbicide in spring while native species are dormant; follow-up needed to ensure that all plants have been killed.

### **Credits**

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