

Coastal Landscaping in Massachusetts

Sample Landscape Plan for a Coastal Bank

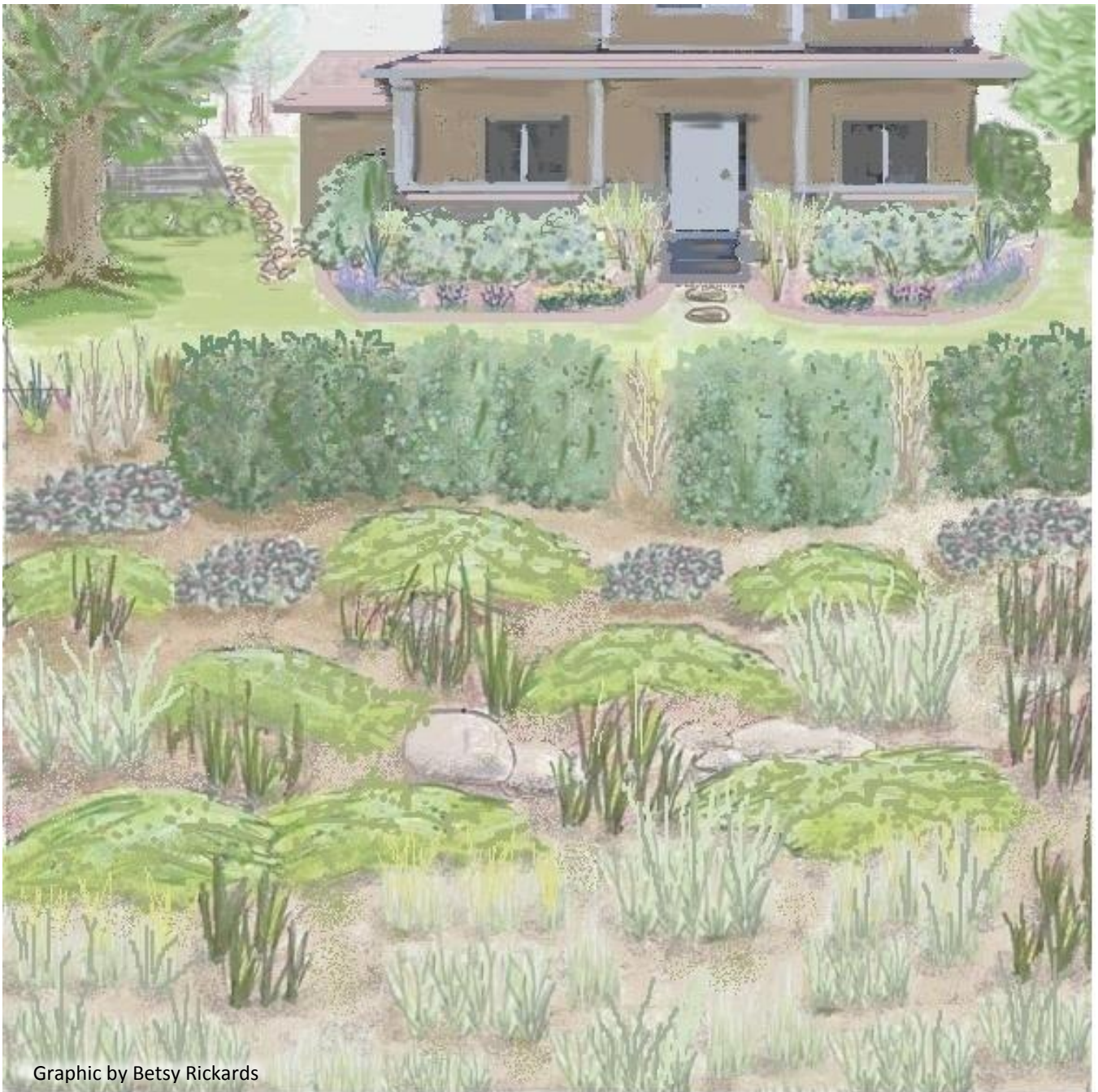
This PDF document provides graphics and additional information to supplement the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) [Coastal Landscaping website](#). It includes a landscape plan for a coastal bank, a landscape profile showing the bank as viewed from the water, and a plant list providing a complete list of species used within the plan (as indicated by the appropriate plant icon). Unless otherwise noted, all listed plants are *native*, which for purposes of this fact sheet means occurring naturally in eastern Massachusetts. For more detailed descriptions of each plant, see [Plant Highlights and Images](#) for PDF fact sheets of Grasses/Perennials, Shrubs/Groundcovers, and Trees.

By creating a native buffer of plants between your house and the shore, you can reduce lawn area, conserve water, reduce the use of fertilizers and pesticides, filter sediments and pollutants, stabilize soils, and help preserve wildlife values. The plants in this design are well adapted to sunny areas and are resistant to dry conditions, wind, and salt spray. Some of the shrubs chosen, such as beach plum, will remain fairly small due to the severity of the environment, yet if grown in high-nutrient soils, these shrubs can grow much taller (as much as 10-12 feet). Because most homeowners want to preserve coastal views, the smaller size of the shrubs is advantageous.

Landscape Plan for Coastal Bank



Landscape Profile for Coastal Bank



The design provides for a pervious-paver driveway and an irregular flagstone walkway, which allow rain water to infiltrate into the ground, preventing runoff that may otherwise cause erosion of the bank. Because coastal homeowners often want to maintain some lawn area, a lawn is included in this plan. However, lawn grasses provide very little storm-damage protection and wildlife benefit. In addition, maintaining a lawn may actually worsen erosion problems when excess water from irrigation systems drains towards the bank or causes groundwater seepages to undermine bank stability. Lawn areas should therefore be kept as small as possible and permanent irrigation systems should not be used.

Also see:

- [Sample Landscape Plan for a Coastal Bank with an Existing Seawall](#)
- [Sample Landscape Plan for a Coastal Dune](#)

Plant List for Landscape Plan for Coastal Bank

Plant icon	Botanical name	Common name	Height	Value
Perennials and grasses				
	<i>Ammophila breviligulata</i>	American Beachgrass	2-3'	Ideal grass for coastal stabilization due to deep spreading roots, quick colonization, and salt tolerance.
	<i>Andropogon gerardii</i>	Big Bluestem	4-8'	Hardy upright grass with interesting seed heads that resemble a turkey's foot and leaves that change colors throughout the seasons.
	<i>Coreopsis rosea</i>	Pink Tickseed	1-2'	Low-maintenance, small, flowering perennial with attractive pink, daisy-like flowers. It can spread by rhizomes or self-seeding.
	<i>Eragrostis spectabilis</i>	Purple Lovegrass	1-3'	Versatile and low-maintenance ornamental grass that grows in an open cluster with attractive reddish-purple blooms.
	<i>Eurybia spectabilis</i>	Eastern Showy Aster	1-2'	Easy-to-grow, drought- and salt-tolerant perennial with showy clusters of violet flowers that bloom from August to October.
	<i>Panicum virgatum</i>	Switchgrass	3-6'	Perennial, clump-forming, warm-season grass with open lacy sprays, reddish-purple seedheads, and deep roots that make it an ideal soil stabilizer.
	<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	Little Bluestem	18"-3'	Adaptable grass that is useful for re-vegetation, soil stability, food for birds, and cover for wildlife.
	<i>Solidago odora</i>	Sweet Goldenrod	2-5'	Adaptable and hardy perennial with aromatic leaves and attractive bright yellow clusters of flowers that bloom from late summer to mid fall.
	<i>Spartina patens</i>	Saltmeadow Cordgrass	1-3'	Perennial grass that tolerates regular inundations of saltwater and spreads by long slender rhizomes.

Plant icon	Botanical name	Common name	Height	Value
Shrubs and groundcovers				
	<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i>	Bearberry	6-12"	Hardy, low-growing evergreen groundcover/shrub that is a good soil stabilizer and has attractive bright red berries that are readily eaten by birds.
	<i>Hydrangea macrophylla</i>	Bigleaf Hydrangea	3-6'	Fast-growing, deciduous shrub that is tolerant of salt and shade and has attractive, large, colorful flowers. (not native; native to Japan)
	<i>Juniperus communis</i> var. <i>depressa</i>	Common Juniper	4'	Dense, spreading, evergreen groundcover/shrub that is useful for erosion control and often found on gravelly slopes and rocky seaside locations.
	<i>Myrica pensylvanica</i>	Northern Bayberry	2-6'	Salt-tolerant, semi-evergreen shrub with berries that are eaten by birds. The dark green leaves are aromatic and may stay on the branches for most of the winter.
	<i>Prunus maritima</i>	Beach Plum	7-14'	Salt-tolerant, deciduous shrub with deep roots, white flowers, and edible fruits. Over time, extensive colonies may develop from a single plant.
	<i>Viburnum dentatum</i>	Arrowwood Viburnum	5-9'	Hardy shrub that is adaptable to a variety of conditions and has fruit valuable for birds.
	<i>Viburnum lentago</i>	Nannyberry	10-18'	Deciduous, multi-stemmed shrub that blooms early in the summer and has attractive fall foliage.
Trees				
	<i>Acer rubrum</i> 'Red Sunset'	Red Maple	40-70'	Fast-growing, deciduous tree with brilliant fall color that are relatively fast growing, tolerant of many conditions, and adaptable.
	<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	Eastern Red Cedar	10-40'	Large evergreen tree that is drought- and salt-tolerant, with berries valuable to wildlife.
	<i>Prunus serotina</i>	Black Cherry	60-90'	Rapid growing tree that is drought- and salt-tolerant, with pendulous branches, fragrant flowers, and berries for wildlife.