

Coastal Landscaping in Massachusetts

Sample Landscape Plan for a Coastal Dune

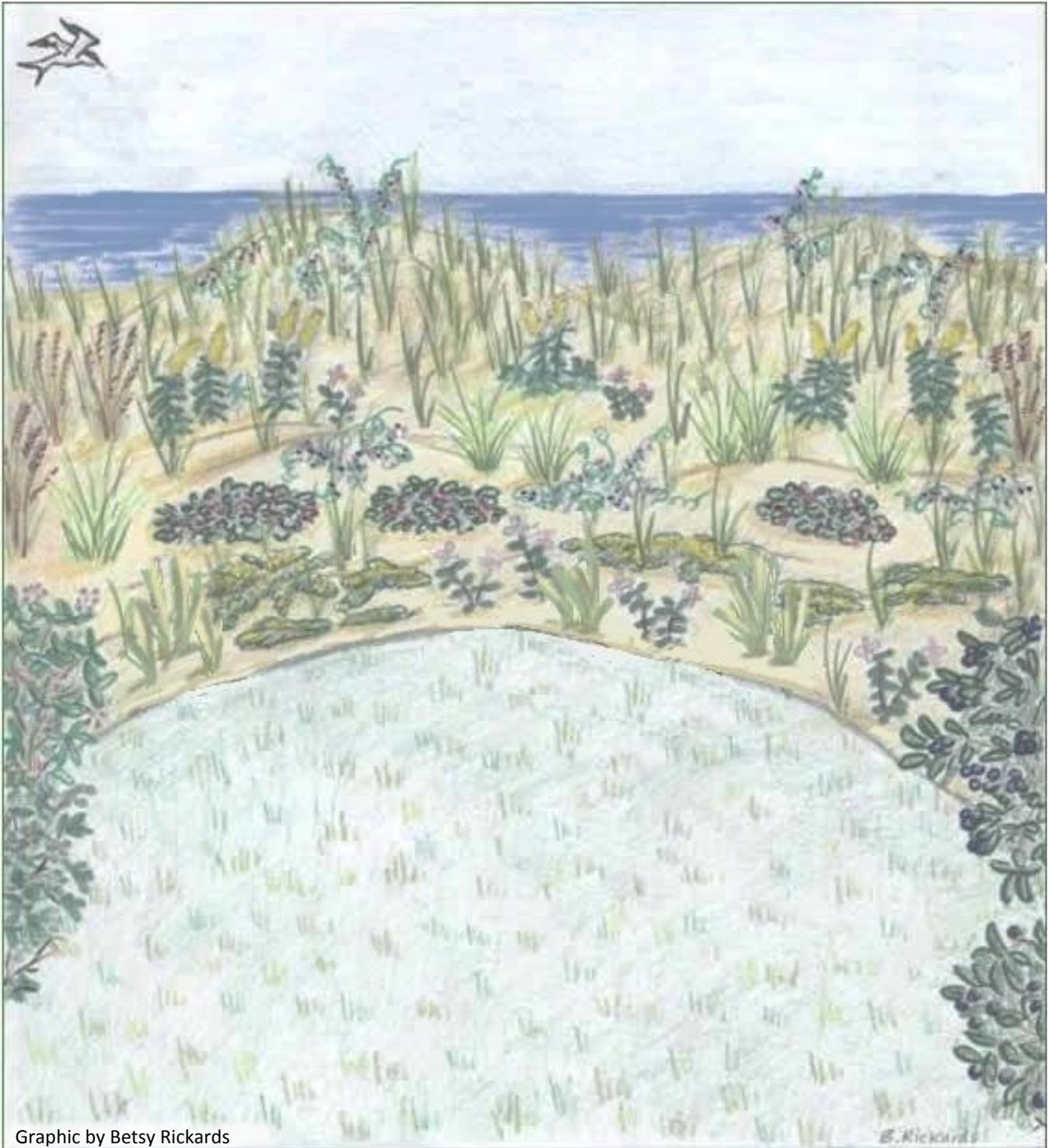
This PDF document provides graphics and additional information to supplement the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) [Coastal Landscaping website](#). It provides a sketched landscape plan for a dune, a landscape profile showing the dune as viewed from the house looking toward the sea, 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 factsheet 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.

This plan incorporates a variety of native grasses, perennials, groundcovers, shrubs, and a few trees that are well suited for a coastal dune environment. By enhancing the natural plantings of a dune and creating a buffer between your house and the dune, you will work in harmony with the natural sedimentary processes of the coastal environment, stabilize sandy soils, reduce lawn area and its accompanying maintenance needs, conserve water, filter sediments and pollutants, and help preserve wildlife values.

Landscape Plan for Coastal Dune



Landscape Profile for Coastal Dune



The plants in this design are well-adapted to sunny areas and are resistant to dry conditions, wind, salt spray, and sand-overtopping. 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, and are therefore not recommended in dune environments and should be kept as small as possible.

Also see:

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

Plant List for Landscape Plan for Coastal Dune

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>Cakile edentula</i>	Sea Rocket	6-20"	Low-growing perennial with fleshy stems and leaves and pale lavender to white flowers that bloom in the summer and are pollinated by bees, flies, beetles, moths, and butterflies.
	<i>Distichlis spicata</i>	Spike Grass	1-3'	Salt- and drought-tolerant perennial grass that can form dense mats that provides good groundcover and habitat for small animals.
	<i>Lathyrus japonicus</i>	Beach Pea	sprawling	Sprawling perennial vine with showy purple or pink flowers and pods that contain small peas that are eaten by animals, such as deer, mice, and birds.
	<i>Leymus mollis</i>	American Dunegrass	4-6'	Erosion-control grass with green foliage and inconspicuous yellow flowers and brown seeds, which forms clumps on coastal dunes and beaches.
	<i>Panicum amarum</i>	Coastal Panic Grass	3-6'	Long-lived grass with an upright and hedge-like form and a deep fibrous root system that stabilizes more sheltered sand dunes—useful for creating wind barriers and wildlife cover. (not native)
	<i>Solidago sempervirens</i>	Seaside Goldenrod	3-5'	Hardy perennial with fleshy, waxy leaves and bright yellow flowers that provide a striking contrast to the green vegetation.

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>Aronia arbutifolia</i>	Red Chokeberry	6-10'	Suckering, spreading, colonizing, deciduous shrub with summer flowers, persistent fruit, and colorful fall foliage.
	<i>Hudsonia tomentosa</i>	Beach Heather	<1'	Low-growing perennial/shrub with bright yellow flowers, a carpet-like surface area of scaly leaves that protects the plant from moisture loss and holds the sand in place, and a network of roots that binds the sediments.
	<i>Myrica pensylvanica</i>	Northern Bayberry	5-7'	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	4-7'	Salt-tolerant, deciduous shrub with deep roots, white flowers, and edible fruits. Extensive colonies may develop from a single plant.
Trees				
	<i>Pinus rigida</i>	Pitch Pine	20-80'	Hardy evergreen tree with persistent cones that mature in the fall. Its tolerance for poor soil conditions makes it useful for reforestation or stabilization where few other trees will grow.