

Supporting guidance for Planting of Dune Grasses

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Note: In November 2023, the link to the Coastal erosion guide in the Further Information section has been corrected. References to Scottish Natural Heritage on this page have also been amended to NatureScot.

To see recent changes to this guidance, [check the bottom of this page](#).

Introduction

This [item](#) helps to stabilise sand dunes. It supports transplanting dune grasses from a suitable borrow area to an eroded face to help trap blown sand.

What needs to be done?

You must consult with NatureScot before applying for this item, to ensure that the dunes you are proposing to repair will benefit and that the area where you propose to take transplant plants from is suitable. Provide written evidence from NatureScot (an email or letter is acceptable) at the time of application.

Pull or dig up plants from a suitable borrow area within the dune system, and replant them on the eroded face. Ensure the remaining vegetation in the borrow area will continue to protect the area from erosion.

The species you can plant include marram grass (*Ammophila arenaria*), sand couchgrass (*Elymus farctus*) and lyme grass (*Leymus arenarius*). Choose species to reflect the significant species within the dune system you have chosen to manage.

Planting offset at 50 centimetres distance will give four plants per square metre.

Transplant marram grass above the mean high-water mark.

Stock, such as sheep or cattle, can cause considerable damage to the replanted site through grazing and trampling. You may need to exclude stock to encourage the dune grasses to grow and stabilise the dunes.

How to increase the success of the option?

Transplanting should not be seen as a one-off operation. Regular maintenance is required to replace unhealthy plants, apply fertilisers, prevent trampling and extend cover to adjacent areas. Work can be undertaken at any time of year, but early spring is generally considered to be the optimum to avoid frosts, storm erosion, drought or trampling. Even assuming no storm erosion, it is likely that it will take two or three years before transplants begin to thrive and spread.

Complementary options

Combine this item with the [Sand-blow Fencing](#) option to reduce wind speed across the sand surface and encourage sand deposition.

Further information

Further information is available in NatureScot's [coastal erosion guide](#) and the Trust for Conservation Volunteer's [Sand Dunes: A Practical Handbook](#).

Recent changes

Section	Change	Previous text	New text
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Further Information	Updated Coastal Erosion Guide link		
What needs to be done?	Additional information on the supporting evidence required.	-	You must consult with Scottish Natural Heritage before applying for this item, to ensure that the dunes you are proposing to repair will benefit and that the area where you propose to take transplant plants from is suitable. Provide written evidence from Scottish Natural Heritage (an email or letter is acceptable) at the time of application.

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