

# *Sesuvium portulacastrum* Sea Purslane<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

Sea purslane is a native, herbaceous perennial found along the coasts of Florida (Fig. 1). It grows on the ocean side of the dunes down to the high tide mark. The thick, fleshy leaves are borne on succulent, reddish-green stems that branch regularly, forming dense stands close to the ground. Small, showy pink flowers are borne more or less continually throughout the year. Each flower opens for only a few hours each day. These plants help build the dunes by catching sand in between stems and leaves. The plant is closely related to the more familiar purslane commonly found in garden centers.

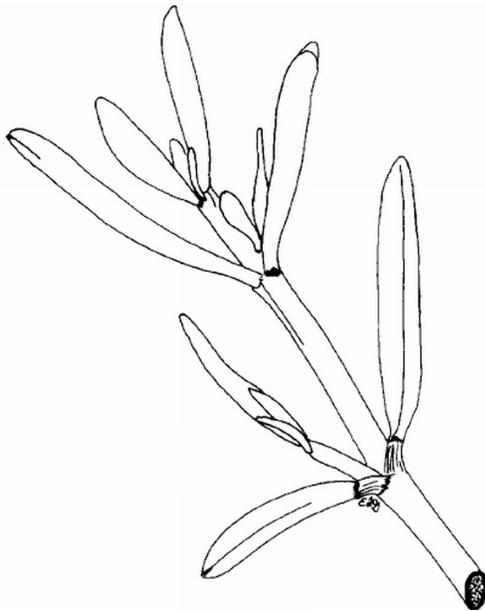


Figure 1. Sea purslane

## General Information

**Scientific name:** *Sesuvium portulacastrum*

**Pronunciation:** sess-SOO-vee-um

por-too-luh-KASS-strum

**Common name(s):** sea purslane

**Family:** *Portulacaceae*

**Plant type:** herbaceous; ground cover

**USDA hardiness zones:** 9 through 11 (Fig. 2)

**Planting month for zone 9:** year round

**Planting month for zone 10 and 11:** year round

**Origin:** native to Florida

**Uses:** ground cover

**Availability:** grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries



Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

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## Description

**Height:** .5 to 1 feet  
**Spread:** depends upon supporting structure  
**Plant habit:** spreading  
**Plant density:** moderate  
**Growth rate:** moderate  
**Texture:** fine

## Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** opposite/subopposite  
**Leaf type:** simple  
**Leaf margin:** entire  
**Leaf shape:** linear  
**Leaf venation:** none, or difficult to see  
**Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen  
**Leaf blade length:** less than 2 inches  
**Leaf color:** green  
**Fall color:** no fall color change  
**Fall characteristic:** not showy

## Flower

**Flower color:** pink  
**Flower characteristic:** year-round flowering

## Fruit

**Fruit shape:** elongated  
**Fruit length:** less than .5 inch  
**Fruit cover:** dry or hard  
**Fruit color:** unknown  
**Fruit characteristic:** inconspicuous and not showy

## Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** not applicable  
**Current year stem/twig color:** reddish  
**Current year stem/twig thickness:** thick

## Culture

**Light requirement:** plant grows in full sun  
**Soil tolerances:** acidic; alkaline; sand  
**Drought tolerance:** high  
**Soil salt tolerances:** good  
**Plant spacing:** 36 to 60 inches

## Other

**Roots:** not applicable  
**Winter interest:** no special winter interest  
**Outstanding plant:** plant has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more  
**Invasive potential:** aggressive, spreading plant  
**Pest resistance:** no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

## Use and Management

Sea purslane is best when planted as a ground cover in a sandy, well-drained soil in the full sun. Virtually no irrigation or fertilizer is needed once the plant is established in the landscape. In many ways it defines a low maintenance plant. It is resistant to the wind and salty air common along the coast. It is not suited for planting in the partial shade. It could be located in a sunny spot inland in a sandy soil, provided the soil drains well.

## Pests and Diseases

No problems are associated with this plant if it is located in the full sun in a well-drained soil.