

*Chasmanthium latifolium* (Michx.) Yates  
Formerly *Uniola latifolia*  
Northern Sea Oats

Northern sea oats is a very graceful ornamental grass that can add three-season interest to the garden. The flowers start out green as they appear late in the summer then turn an attractive bronze and they persist on the stems on into the winter. At the end of the season when the flowering stems dry out they can be cut and make a striking addition to dried flower arrangements.

Full sun and a well-drained, fertile soil favor the best performance of this plant. The percentage of seed fertility is rather low compared to other grasses however, most seeds that hit the ground do germinate so there is a tendency towards unwelcome spread through self-seeding.

Frequently at the mention this plant folks who have been to the southeastern seaboard of North America will declare, "Hey, it's illegal to have that." What they are usually thinking of is *Uniola latifolia*, a very similar plant that is important in helping to control erosion and anchor sand dunes on southern beaches.



Now while it is unlawful in many places to dig up or even disturb *Uniola latifolia* it does not appear to be strictly illegal to own since it is commercially available. **However**, given its tendency to spread aggressively *U. latifolia* is definitely not recommended for the home garden.