

TREES AND PLANTS

JOHNSON'S SEAGRASS

ABOUT

Johnson's Seagrass is a threatened species. It has a limited distribution and is the least abundant seagrass within its range. This species is only known to reproduce asexually (self-reproducing) and it may be that this limits its distribution. It plays a major role in the survival of the flora and fauna of the sea bottom and has been recorded as a food source for endangered West Indian Manatees and threatened Green Sea Turtles. Johnson's Seagrass is found in separate patches along the east coast of Florida and the largest concentration has been found inside Lake Worth Inlet. The species is found in coarse sand and muddy waters with high tidal currents. Characteristics of Johnson's Seagrass include smooth, flat foliage leaves in pairs with well-defined borders. It is a creeping rhizome (underground stem producing roots and leafy shoots) with stalk less female flowers and long necked fruit.

DID YOU KNOW?

The threat to Johnson's Seagrass comes from both human and natural disturbance. On the human front, boat propellers, anchor moorings and dredging causes huge damage to the root systems and the build up of silt and degradation of water quality due to human activity is also a great threat. It reproduces slowly being asexual and must have a stable environment to thrive. Many abundant populations of Johnson's Seagrass are located close to inlets and during hurricanes storm surge may drastically clear or redistribute sediments thereby eroding or burying existing patches of the species. For more information visit www.nmfs.noaa.gov

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Where is the largest known concentration of Johnson's Seagrass?

- a. Key West, Florida
- b. Lake Worth Inlet
- c. Vero Beach, Florida
- d. Johnson's Inlet

Answer is B.

