

## ***Through the Sanctuary***

### **Marine Couch (*Sporobolus virginicus*)**

*Robyn Howard*

Marine Couch is native to Australia but also grows in New Zealand, India, Africa, Indonesia, the Caribbean, China and Pacific Islands. It is one of the specialist plants which copes well in the intertidal zone. At the Wetlands Sanctuary, it grows near the river, and may be seen from the boardwalk near the far Crab Hide, and all the way to the pontoon.

It is a perennial, creeping grass which forms tussocks or mats thickly, and may attain a height of over 50 centimetres. Flowers are generally green or may also be purple, and appear at any time of the year, but mostly during the warmer months. The Marine Couch in the area bounded by the loop to and from the far crab hide was thick and healthy prior to 2011 when it was inundated for long periods by floods, tidal surges and king tides. Most of that patch did not survive and has not recuperated sufficiently to revegetate across that area.

In northern Australia, cattle are sometimes grazed on Saltwater Couch (its alternative name), and at the sanctuary, wallabies and kangaroos emerge to feed in the evenings.

