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**BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES ISSUES  
PERMANENT BEACH VITEX QUARANTINE**

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On December 3, 2009, the Virginia Board of Agriculture and Consumer Services voted to make permanent a Beach Vitex quarantine. Todd P. Haymore, Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS), announced a temporary quarantine on October 26, 2009, for four Virginia localities: the counties of Accomack and Northampton on the Eastern Shore and the cities of Norfolk and Virginia Beach. The same localities are included in the permanent quarantine.

“The Board’s action to limit the spread of this highly invasive plant was very timely,” said Haymore. “Beach Vitex grows rapidly along dunes and shorelines causing damage to these areas by crowding out native plants and threatening the habitats of various animals, including the endangered loggerhead sea turtle. Beach Vitex is less effective than native grasses in controlling dune erosion, and it crowds out those native plants that are considered superior for dune stabilization.”

The Beach Vitex quarantine restricts the movement of the plant itself, in any life stage, including roots, stems and seeds, as well as the movement of other regulated articles such as sand, soil or mulch known to contain any life stage of Beach Vitex.

"VDACS will continue to monitor this situation and work with localities and other partners to protect Virginia's coastal ecosystems," said Haymore. "If warranted, the agency has the authority to expand the Beach Vitex quarantine as needed."

The first confirmed finding of Beach Vitex in Virginia occurred in Norfolk in 2008. Since then, it has been detected in other coastal sites in the Commonwealth. Beach Vitex has the potential to spread to other areas through artificial movement by individuals or through natural movement. Seeds and stems could be carried by water currents to uninfested coastal areas. The plant can reproduce easily from seeds and even the smallest pieces of broken stem.

For more information on Beach Vitex, citizens should contact their city or county agricultural Extension agent, listed in the local government section of their telephone directory under Virginia Cooperative Extension Service (VCE), or visit the VCE Web site at [www.ext.vt.edu/offices](http://www.ext.vt.edu/offices). They may also call VDACS’ Office of Plant and Pest Services in Richmond at 804.786.3515 or in Franklin at 757.562.6637. More information is available at [www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/plants/beachvitex.shtml](http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/plants/beachvitex.shtml), the Web site of the United States Department of Agriculture, National Invasive Species Information Center.

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