

# LE GUANAHANI ST BARTH

## Le Guanahani Seagrass Meadows

Guests often ask about the dark green underwater vegetation found in the shallow waters of Grand Cul de Sac. These are the seagrass meadows

Seagrasses evolved from land-plants that returned to live in the ocean. Like land plants, they have leaves, shoots, flowers and seeds. But unlike land plants, they don't need stiff stems to counteract gravity and stand upright. Instead the leaves are supported by their natural buoyancy in the water. This keeps them flexible in the waves and current. If you snorkel over the meadows you will see the grasses sway beautifully in unison with the swells, like fields of wheat in a gentle breeze.



There are several species of seagrass but the two main types in Le Guanahani waters are the wide blade turtle grass *Thalassia testudinum* and the more spindly manatee grass *Syringodium filiforme*. Just 0.4 ha or a single acre can produce 10 tonnes of seagrass leaves in a year.

## The value of seagrasses at Le Guanahani

As many as 40,000 fish and 50 million small invertebrates can live in just one half hectare or one acre of seagrass. The meadows of Le Guanahani are home to species like, sea turtles, conch, lobsters, and the juvenile stages of hundreds of fish spend their childhood days protected among the leaves and roots. Spotted eagle rays and bar jacks often come to feed on the small creatures that burrow into the sand by the roots. If you snorkel over the grassy meadows you can often see hundreds of different species. (Check out the Le Guanahani snorkeling and kayaking trail for Grand Cul de Sac.)

Seagrass meadows trap and store sand, to keep a supply for the beach. Seagrass cuts down on wave energy, making the waters calmer and keeping more sand on the beaches for guests to enjoy. Seagrasses are known throughout the world as important indicator species that reflect the overall health of coastal ecosystems.

**Blue Carbon:** Seagrass meadows reduce the carbon footprint and help to protect our planet. In Grand Cul de Sac, the shallow waters off Le Guanahani Hotel harbor 1,1300 sq meters (121,625 sq ft) of seagrass meadows, which is the equivalent of 55,168 metric tonnes (60,812 tons) of Carbon offset. When you consider that the average person generates 4.6 tonnes per year\* Le Guanahani seagrass meadows are making a difference for the planet.

\*(Carbon Footprint by country: Metric tonnes of carbon produced per person/yr in: France 6, Germany 9, Italy 7, Mexico 4, Spain 7, Netherlands 15, UK 8, Canada 16, USA 18.)

*The Seagrass meadows in Grand Cul de Sac and all the creatures that live in them are protected as part of the natural reserve.*