

War on Weeds – Weeds are Everybody’s Problem

THE ISSUE: Saltcedar

Saltcedar (*Tamarix ramosissima* Ledeb) is a deciduous perennial shrub or tree native to the Middle East. It was introduced into the U.S. in the early 1800’s as an ornamental. Saltcedar has been used in wind breaks and for erosion control, but its aggressiveness has allowed it to escape. It invades riparian areas along rivers, streams, ditches, marshes and springs. It uses an extremely high amount of water (up to 13-acre feet of water per year).



Photo courtesy of Leslie J Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org

Saltcedar typically grows 6 to 26 feet tall. It has smooth bark that becomes rough and grooved with age. It has small (1/16 inch long) bluish-green leaves that have a scale-like appearance. It has a deep tap root and lateral rhizomes that can send up new shoots. Pink-white flowers are produced from March to September. A single mature tree can produce up to 600,000 seeds/year. Tiny, plumed seeds are dispersed by wind and water. Saltcedar can live for 50-100 years.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Options:

- Prevention – Learn to identify this plant. Never transport unknown plant material. Always plant clean seed.
- Mechanical – Digging both by hand and with an excavator can be effective options, although it often requires repeated efforts. Remove the root crown and as many roots as possible. Then pile roots and let dry before burning or mulching.
- Biological – Saltcedar leaf beetle (*Diorhabda elongata*) can cause complete defoliation of Saltcedar.
- Chemical – Herbicide applications play an important role in the control of Saltcedar. Application methods include cut stump, foliar sprays, and basal bark treatments can be effective. Herbicide active ingredients that have proven to be effective include Triclopyr, Imazapyr, and glyphosate. Refer to https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5180537.pdf for more information about herbicide application methods, timing, rates, and products. **Always read and follow herbicide label directions.**

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