

By DLC Resources, Inc.

The Invasive Saltcedar



Saltcedar Leaf



Adult Saltcedar

Saltcedar Damage

Tamarisk, better known as Saltcedar, is an extremely invasive foreign plant that causes damage in several different ways.

Originally introduced to the United States as an ornamental shrub, the Saltcedar grows rapidly and can reach heights up to 26 feet. The Saltcedar also reproduces rapidly; it can flower in its first year and at maturity can produce 600,000 seeds annually. Its adaptability and resilience to harsh elements allows the Saltcedar to aggressively colonize. All of these traits combined make for an invasive plant.

The Saltcedar's fast growing roots spread deep and wide causing damage to sidewalks and walls. Due to its rapid and successful reproduction, the Saltcedar escapes controlled cultivation easily and germinates in unwanted areas. It also consumes large quantities of water (up to 200 gallons per day) and deposits salt to form a saline crust preventing other plant life from thriving in its vicinity.

Recognizing a Saltcedar

Though it looks similar to an evergreen the Saltcedar is a deciduous tree (or shrub)

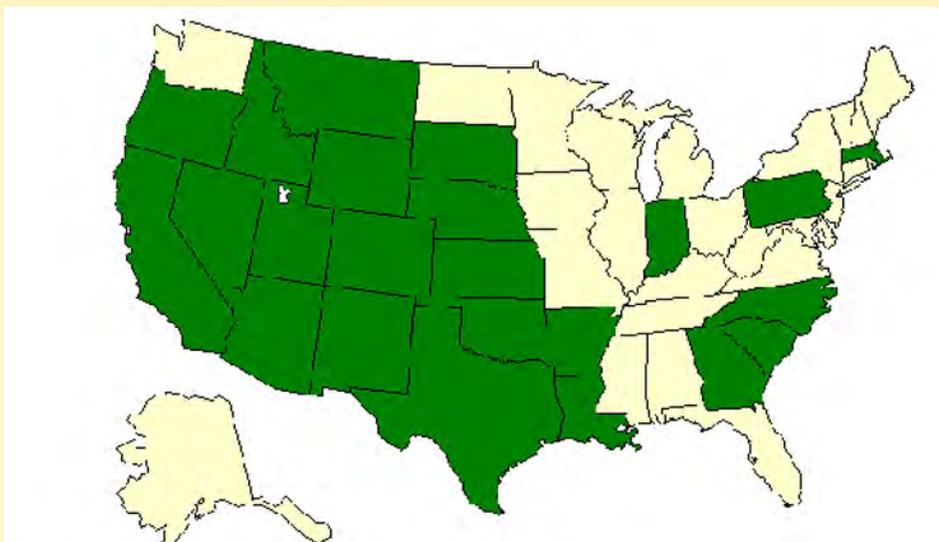
with small scale like leaves. Its pink to almost white flowers form dense masses at the top of its long slender branches.

Eradication

Getting rid of the Saltcedar is no easy feat. It is resistant to fire, flooding, cutting and herbicide. A Certified Arborist and Licensed Herbicide Applicator can eliminate the Saltcedar by cutting it to ground level and applying chemicals to the stump.

A list of valley arborists can be found at www.treecareindustry.org/index.aspx. and Licensed Herbicide Applicators can be found by contacting the Arizona Structural Pest Control Commission (SPCC) at <http://www.sb.state.az.us/ContactUs.php>.

Saltcedar Invasion in the United States



Native to Eurasia, the invasive Saltcedar (or Tamarisk) was introduced to the United States in the 1800's for ornamental, wind break, shade and erosion control reasons. Due to its rapid growth and reproduction cycles, combined with its resistance to flood and drought, the Saltcedar has taken root in Western United States, choking out native plants.



Saltcedar Bloom

Information for this article came from the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board web site, www.nwcb.wa.gov, last updated 3/31/2007.