

Riparian Noxious Weeds

Saltcedar/tamarisk Identification and Management

Saltcedar, aka tamarisk (*Tamarix ramosissima*), is a non-native deciduous or evergreen shrub or small tree that grows from 5 to 20 feet tall. The bark on saplings and stems is reddish-brown. The leaves are small and scale-like and the flowers are pink to white and 5-petaled. Saltcedar reproduces by seeds as well as vegetatively. A mature plant can produce up to 600,000 seeds per year. Seeds are viable for up to 45 days under ideal conditions. Saltcedar buds break dormancy in February or March. Flowering occurs anytime between April and August. Ideal conditions for saltcedar seedling survival are saturated soil during the first few weeks of life, a high water table, and open sunny ground with little competition from other plants.



Saltcedar was introduced from Eurasia and is now widespread in the United States. It was introduced as an ornamental and as a streambank stabilizer. Saltcedar crowds out native stands of riparian and wetland vegetation. It increases salinity of surface soil, rendering the soil inhospitable to native plant species. It uses more water than native plant communities, one large saltcedar plant can consume up to 200 gallons of water per day. Saltcedar can be found along floodplains, riverbanks, streambanks, marshes, and irrigation ditches.

The most effective method of control for saltcedar is to prevent its establishment through proper land management. Monitor susceptible areas for new infestations.

On the backside of this sheet are saltcedar management recommendations. If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact CSU Cooperative Extension, Boulder County at 303-678-6383 or Boulder County Parks and Open Space Weed Coordinator at 303-678-6110.

Recommended management methods:

Cultural - After managing saltcedar infestations, other vegetation must be established to prevent re-invasion. Competitive grasses and planted cottonwood cuttings have proven to be effective at reducing the chances of re-invasion. Contact your local CSU Extension office or Natural Resources Conservation Service office for proper seed mix recommendations.

Mechanical - A bulldozer or prescribed fire can be used to open up large stands of saltcedar. These methods must be followed up with a herbicide treatment of the resprouts when they are 1 to 2 meters tall.

Herbicides - For large stands of saltcedar that would essentially be monotypic, foliar applications of the herbicide Arsenal or Arsenal plus Roundup are effective. Late summer/early fall are optimum treatment times. This is recommended for areas that have little to no desirable shrubs and trees.

In areas where woody native plants are present and their continued existence is desired, it may be necessary to cut and treat saltcedar stumps with a herbicide. This is referred to as the cut-stump method. Cuts should be made within 2 inches of the ground surface, immediately followed by a herbicide application to the perimeters of the cut stems. The products Arsenal and Garlon are effective but must be applied within one minute after cutting because wound healing occurs very quickly and decreases herbicide penetration.

Always read, understand, and follow herbicide label directions. The herbicide label is the LAW!

