

WEED OF THE MONTH

SALT CEDAR

November 2025



Introduction

Welcome to our "Weed of the Month" feature, designed to raise awareness about the impact of noxious invasive weeds on our environment. This month, we're focusing on Saltcedar (*Tamarix ramosissima*), an aggressive plant species that poses a significant threat to native ecosystems and agricultural lands.

Originating from Asia, Saltcedar has become very invasive to many parts of North America. It thrives in a variety of habitats, including marshes, ditches, canals, riparian areas, and some upland sites.



Identification & Behavior

Saltcedar is a shrubby tree. It produces thousands of small pink flowers during the spring and summer months and has gray-green leaves. These leaves also have scaly cedarlike characteristics. The seeds are very small and have a tuft of hairs on the end of them allowing them to travel long distances.

It has an extensive root system that can produce a taproot up ten feet deep. One Saltcedar plant can produce up to 500,000 seeds in one year.

Saltcedar reproduces by seed and rhizomes and can be spread by horticulture, wind, and water. It can survive a multitude of environments including drought, heat, cold, salinity, fire, and flooding. Its bloom period ranges from March to October.



Impact

The presence of Saltcedar can have serious ecological and economic consequences. Large plants can soak up to 200 gallons of water per day leaving only salt left in the soil. The plant can also impact the structures of streams by trapping sediment and creating sandbars in rivers.

In the wintertime, Saltcedar secretes salt from specialized glands on its leaves. When the leaves drop, the salt accumulates in the upper soil layers. This makes the salt content too high for other native plants to grow causing negative impacts to both farmers and ranchers.

Top left: Saltcedar infestation

Middle: Saltcedar adult flower blossom

Right: Young Saltcedar

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Agriculture

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Control & Management

Mechanical control methods include mowing, burning, cropping, chaining and disking. However, these methods usually only suppress Saltcedar temporarily and will not eradicate infestations. Also, these methods can be labor intensive, expensive, and may be more effective on small infestations.

Chemical controls should be applied in the late summer or fall when plants are still growing and not water stressed. This will allow the greatest amount of herbicide to translocate to the below-ground tissues. Cut stump treatments can be made year-round but should be avoided under drought conditions.

Prevention

Identification is key when it comes to preventing and controlling the spread of Saltcedar. Routinely inspect and maintain your property for any signs of this invader. Be vigilant for any signs of this weed in your area and report sightings to the Sutter County Agricultural Commissioner's Office at (530) 822-7500.

By staying informed and taking proactive measures, we can work together to curb the spread of Saltcedar (*Tamarix ramosissima*) and protect our native ecosystems. Join us next month for a new "Weed of the Month" feature, where we'll highlight another noxious invasive plant and share tips on how to address it.

Resources

For more information about Saltcedar, visit the California Invasive Plant Council website at:

<https://www.cal-ipc.org/plants/profile/tamarix-ramosissima-profile/>

For more weed newsletters or information about our other county programs, visit our website at:

<https://www.suttercounty.org/government/county-departments/agricultural-department>



Thank you for your dedication to preserving our environment and agricultural land!

-Sutter County Agricultural Commissioner's Office