

Saltcedar (*Tamarix ramosissima*, *Tamarix chinensis*, *Tamarix parviflora*) was introduced into the United States in the late 1800's for streambank stabilization. Saltcedar or tamarisk is native to Europe. Saltcedar invades riparian areas displacing native species. Once established, saltcedar can rapidly take over and form a monoculture.

Concern

A fully grown saltcedar plant can transpire up to 200 gallons of water per day. Saltcedar has been documented to dry up entire lakes in the Southwest. Fallen saltcedar leaves exude salt that accumulates in the soil. Over time, the soil becomes too saline for other plants to grow.

Identification

Saltcedar is a deciduous shrub or small tree ranging from 5 to 20 feet tall (see cover). Flower color ranges from white to a dark pink (Figure 1). The seeds are very small and are easily dispersed by wind, water, and animals. A



FIGURE 1: SALTCEDAR FLOWERS

typical saltcedar plant produces upwards of one-half million seeds annually.



FIGURE 2: WOODY TAPROOT ON A 5-YEAR-OLD PLANT

Growth

Saltcedar seeds can germinate in water or in moist soil. Once germinated, the plant rapidly develops a taproot that can reach a depth of 50 feet. (Figure 2).

Location

Saltcedar is a very hardy plant found from Mexico to Canada. It currently infests more than 1.5 million acres in the western United

States, causing major environmental and economic problems wherever it is found.

Saltcedar can be found in many horticultural settings throughout North Dakota. Wild infestations have been documented in almost every central and western North Dakota county along the Little Missouri, Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers and Lake Sakakawea (Figure 3). It has also been found in a wildlife management area in southeastern North Dakota and two recreation areas in the southwestern part of the state.

Control

Saltcedar is a difficult and often very expensive plant to control. Prevention is the best means of controlling saltcedar, but if the plant is established, chemical control is the preferred



FIGURE 3: WILD SALTCEDAR PLANT

method. After applying chemicals, do not remove the top growth for three years, otherwise resprouting might occur.

Although small plants can be pulled by hand and incinerated, the use of fire and mechanical methods to control large plants can actually cause extensive regrowth from the plant's crown which is 8 to 14 inches below ground.

A biological control agent is presently being researched, but it is not feasible here due to the small, scattered acreage presently found in North Dakota.

What you can do

If you discover saltcedar or a plant you think may be saltcedar, report the location to:

The North Dakota
Department of Agriculture
Noxious Weeds Section
1-800-242-7535

or

Your Local County Weed Board

North Dakota's Noxious Weeds

- Absinth wormwood
- Canada thistle
- Dalmatian toadflax
- Diffuse knapweed
- Field bindweed
- Leafy spurge
- Musk thistle
- Purple loosestrife
- Russian knapweed
- Saltcedar
- Spotted knapweed
- Yellow starthistle

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Saltcedar

*A new threat to
North Dakota's rivers,
streams and wildlife*



- Identify
 - Report
 - Control