



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

Baccharis halimifolia¹

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Introduction

Salt-bush is native to coastal and interior wetlands and is most often seen invading this type of landscape (Fig. 1). It is often seen in its native habitat with Wax Myrtle in wet sites. The whitish flowers and fruits bring this rarely-noticed plant into view in the fall landscape. The 2-inch-long leaves and shrubby habit allow it to blend into the background in most landscapes. Seeds are poisonous if they are eaten.

General Information

Scientific name: *Baccharis halimifolia*

Pronunciation: BACK-uh-riss hal-lim-if-FOLE-ee-uh

Common name(s): Salt-Bush, Groundsel-Bush

Family: *Compositae*

Plant type: shrub

USDA hardiness zones: 5 through 10 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 7: year round

Planting month for zone 8: year round

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: native to Florida

Uses: hedge; specimen; border; mass planting; small parking lot islands (< 100 square feet in size); medium-sized parking lot islands (100-200 square feet in size); large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size)

Availability: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

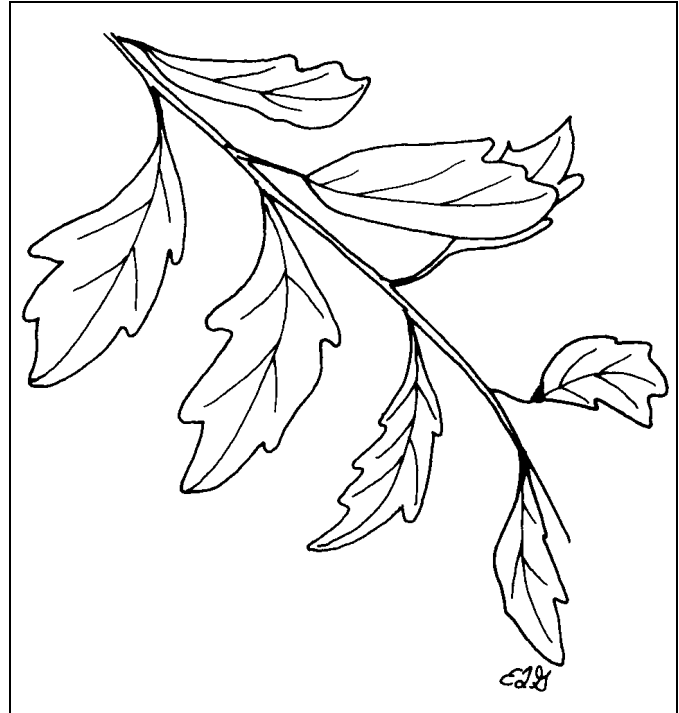


Figure 1. Salt-Bush.

Height: 8 to 12 feet

Spread: 6 to 12 feet

Plant habit: vase shape; round

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: fine

Foliage

Description

1. This document is Fact Sheet FPS-58, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: October 1999. Please visit the EDIS web site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
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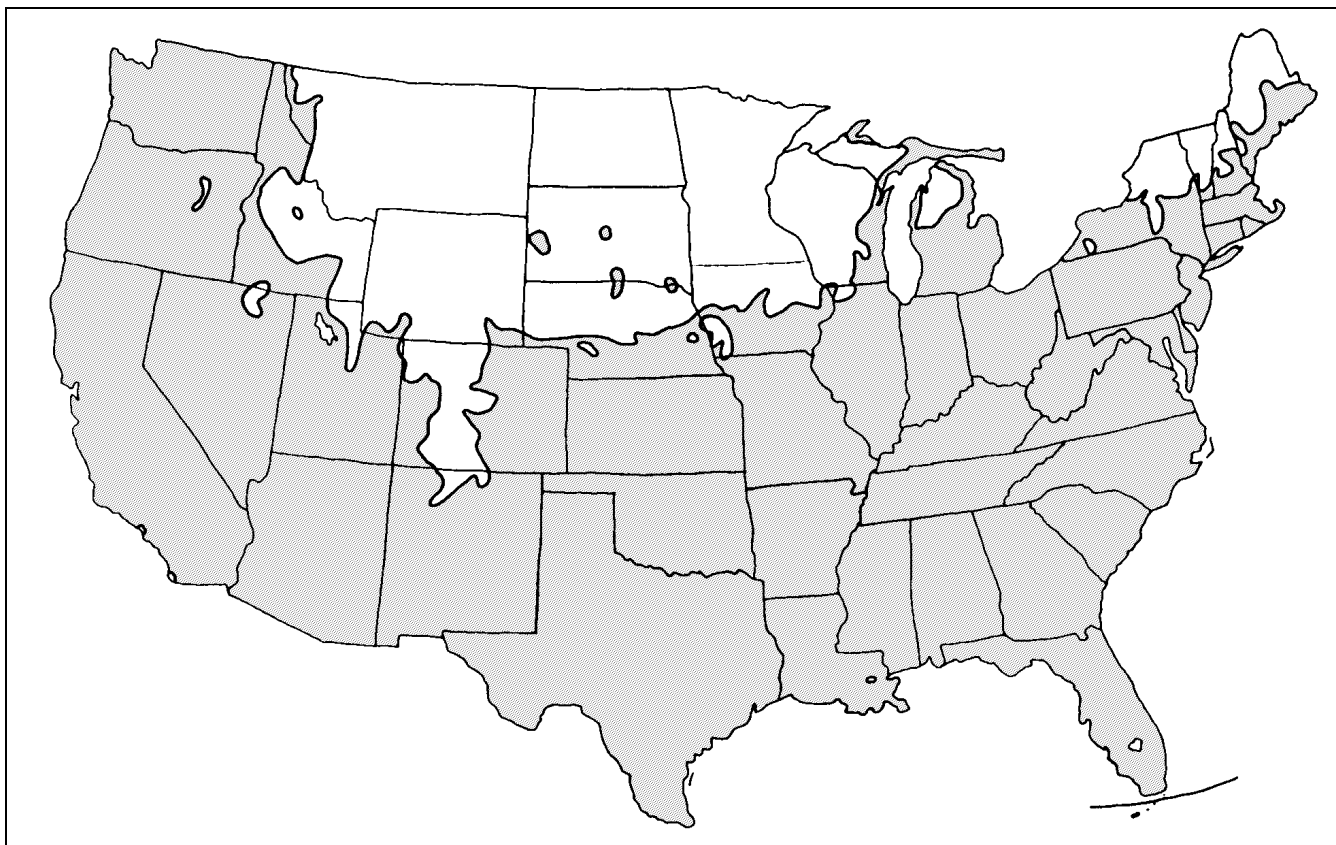


Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf arrangement: alternate
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: dentate
Leaf shape: obovate
Leaf venation: none, or difficult to see
Leaf type and persistence: deciduous
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches
Leaf color: silver/gray
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white
Flower characteristic: fall flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval
Fruit length: less than .5 inch
Fruit cover: dry or hard
Fruit color: white
Fruit characteristic: showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not particularly showy; can be trained to grow with a short, single trunk; typically multi-trunked or clumping stems
Current year stem/twig color: brown
Current year stem/twig thickness: thin

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in full sun
Soil tolerances: extended flooding; acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; clay; loam;
Drought tolerance: moderate
Soil salt tolerances: good
Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable

Winter interest: plant has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers

Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: native plant that often reproduces into nearby landscapes

Pest resistance: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

Use and Management

Salt-bush is rarely planted by designers and horticulturists, perhaps because it is too 'common' in native stands. A useful shrub or small tree for reclaiming wet sites, Salt-bush could be used more frequently near retention basins and drainage ditches. It has a good tolerance to brackish water. It is well suited for planting in wet sites throughout the State. With proper care to remove recurring dead wood, nice small-tree specimens can be created. These can become nice additions to many landscape. They come into flower and are attractive at a time when few other small trees and shrubs are flowering.

Pests and Diseases

No serious pests or diseases appear to affect this plant.