

# *Carpobrotus edulis* (L.) N.E. Br.

*Carpobrotus edulis* commonly known as iceplant or Hottentot fig, is a mat-forming succulent native to South Africa. It is invasive primarily in coastal habitats in many parts of the world. It was often introduced as an ornamental plant or used for planting along roadsides, or for erosion control from which it has spread to become invasive. Its main impacts are smothering, reduced regeneration of native flora and changes to soil pH and nutrient regimes.

In its native range of South Africa, *C. edulis* is often seen as a pioneer in disturbed sites.

The iceplant's introduced range includes Portugal, Italy, France, United Kingdom, Ireland, Germany, Spain, Canary Islands, Balearic Islands, Gibraltar, Malta, Albania, Greece, New Zealand, western USA, Australia, St Helena, French Polynesia, Pitcairn, Mexico, Chile, Argentina, and Tunisia.

Hybridisation between *C. edulis* and *C. acinaciformis* has been reported in the Mediterranean region; there are concerns that this may lead to intensified invasion (Suehs *et al.* 2004).

*C. edulis* competes with endemic plants in Spain such as the protected *Limonium emarginatum*, which it replaces at higher topographical levels in populations settled on both coastal dunes and cliffs (Garzon *et al.* 2006). On the Balearic Islands' *C. edulis* colonizes rocky and



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littoral habitats. It competes with and is a threat to the 'Critically Endangered (CR)' *Apium bermejoi*, a species which occurs only on one site and at the last census numbered 98 individuals.

The most effective way of removing *C. edulis* plants is by hand. Large mats can be rolled but it is important to ensure that all bits and fragments are removed. The fragility of the habitats that *C. edulis* colonizes makes it difficult to use mechanical and chemical methods. Broad spectrum herbicides are recommended to control this species.

## References:

- Garzón, O., Castillo, J.M., Figueroa, M.E. 2006. Competition between the invasive species *Carpobrotus edulis* and the endemic species *Limonium emarginatum* in Gibraltar Straight. In: Invasive plants in Mediterranean Type Regions of the World (Ed. by S Brunel). Council of Europe publishing. Strasbourg. p. 345.
- Suehs, C.M., Affre, L. and Medail, F. 2004. Invasion dynamics of two alien *Carpobrotus* (Aizoaceae) taxa on a Mediterranean island: I. Genetic diversity and introgression. *Heredity*. 92: 31-40.



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