



United States Department of Agriculture

Soil Conservation Service

Davis, California



'Marana' Fourwing Saltbush



'Marana' Fourwing Saltbush

(*Atriplex canescens*)

The USDA Soil Conservation Service, the California Agricultural Experiment Station, and the California Department of Fish and Game cooperated in the release of 'Marana' fourwing saltbush. 'Marana' was developed at the SCS Plant Materials Center, Lockeford, California.

Description

A native, evergreen shrub with dense foliage, about 1.8 to 2.7m high and 2.4 to 3.6m wide (8 to 9 x 8 to 12 feet). The leaves are gray-green, 1.5 to 5cm long, 2 to 8mm wide (1/12 to 2 x 1/16 to 3/18 inches), linear, alternate, single-veined from base, covered by dense gray scales on both surfaces.

Adaptation

This species occurs abundantly in the Colorado and Mohave deserts of Southern California, but is also adapted to the Mediterranean climate of California at elevations up to 1,220m (4,000 feet) and at annual precipitation ranging from 20 to 100cm (8 to 40 inches).

Uses

'Marana' fourwing saltbush has shown excellent performance for use as a conservation plant on critical areas for upland game cover and for environmental enhancement on sandy to clay loam, well drained soils. This species has shown superior performance to all other varieties tested to date in the Mediterranean climate.

Establishment

This fourwing saltbush strain is an excellent seed producer, with seed maturing from October through December.

Seed dries on the plant and allows some flexibility in harvesting, but wind and heavy rains can shatter seed as well. There are about 132,000 dewinged seed per kilogram (60,000 per pound). Seed germination has varied from 55 to 85 percent. Plants are propagated by seeding into containers in the greenhouse and by direct field planting. Seeding rates are 16 lbs. per acre drilled and 24 lbs. per acre broadcast.

Seed Availability

The Lockeford Plant Materials Center is responsible for maintaining a supply of breeder seed. Plants are available from several commercial nurseries.

The Plant Materials Center located in Lockeford, California is one of the 23 centers the Soil Conservation Service operates. Special emphasis is placed on finding suitable plants for erosion control on soils and sites where it is difficult to establish protective vegetative cover.

Plant materials are a significant component of about two-thirds of the conservation practices that farmers, ranchers and others find essential to the solution of erosion and sedimentation problems. It is SCS policy to assemble, evaluate, release and distribute for commercial increase, new or improved plant materials needed for resource conservation and development.

SCS assistance is available without regard to race, creed, color, sex, or national origin.