

## INVASIVE PLANTS THAT MAY NEED TO BE EVICTED; THOSE THAT SHOULD NOT BE PLANTED

By: Gene Blacklock

- **Giant Reed** (*Arundo donax*) – Does not reproduce sexually in this area, growing and dispersing mainly through rhizomes, a native of Asia. Originally planted for erosion and wind management. Drought and cold hardy it can be especially aggressive, a problem along area streams.
- **Guinea grass** (*Panicum maximum*) – First reported to be in this area by Jones, 1960. It reproduces rapidly and has become a serious problem in this area. Its abundance is at considerable loss to our native species. It is drought and cold hardy, does nothing for wildlife.
- **Kleberg and King Ranch Bluestem** (*Dichanthium annulatum* and *Andropogon saccharoides*) – Designed for livestock. Both are aggressive and can be a problem. They often dominate grasslands and exclude native species, both cold and drought hardy. Neither are considered good for wildlife.
- **Buffelgrass** (*Pennisetum ciliare*) – An introduced warm season bunch grass originally introduced for livestock grazing, 30-90 cm. in height. It reproduces sexually, becomes a monoculture and prefers dark soils, cold and drought hardy. Does little for wildlife.
- **Salt Cedar** (*Tamarix aphylla*) – An evergreen tree to 6 m. or more with gray-green leaves. Flowers mauve-pink about 2mm. long, mauve-petals about 2 mm long; native of North Africa and South Asia. It is an especially aggressive plant that requires large quantities of water; has special adaptations to out compete native species.
- **Salt Cedar** (*Tamarix canariensis*, *chinensis*, *gallica*, and *ramosissima*) – Deciduous shrubs or small trees to 3 m. or more high, native to Mediterranean, Canary Islands, China, Japan, south Europe, Russia and south Asia. Habits like *Tamarix aphylla*.
- **Australian Pine/Horsetail Beefwood** (*Casuarina equisetifolia*) – tree attaining a height of 55 m or more, and a diameter of 2.5 m. At a distance appears to be a pine but is actually a hard wood. Native of Asia and Australia, cold sensitive, can be a problem along the immediate coast. Provides very little for wildlife.
- **Popinac** (*Leucaena leucocephala*) – Tropical evergreen tree or shrub that can attain a height of 6 m. Leaves are pinnate, leaflets 8-20 m. long. Flower heads globose, creamy white, unisexual, produces large numbers of bean like seed pods. Drought hardy and will freeze to ground during periods of cold weather. It enjoys most soil types. A native of Asia, it is aggressive and is not especially good for wildlife. Most numerous along the immediate coast, can be a problem.
- **Brazilian Peppertree** (*Schinus terebinthifolius*) – Evergreen shrub attaining a height of 6 m. Leaves compound, dark green, produces clusters of rusty red berries. Originally used in ornamental landscaping projects here and in Florida. Drought hardy but cold sensitive; does well in most soils. Berries highly favored by birds. It is invasive locally in the Texas Coastal Bend.
- **Castor bean** (*Ricinus communis*) – Perennial sub shrub 1 – 3 m. high, palmate leaves 20-35 cm. wide. Cultured, escaped, can be a problem, especially along streams and in damp areas; seeds poisonous. It is fairly drought hardy but not cold hardy, will not flourish in soils that are alkaline. Reproduces commonly by seeds. It does nothing for wildlife.
- **Chinese privet** (*Ligustrum sinensis*) – A perennial evergreen shrub 3 m., simple leaves with clusters of white fragrant flowers. Invasive, in this area mainly associated with riparian sites in Aransas, Colhoun and Refugio Counties, birds favor the berries.
- **Wax-leaf Ligustrum** (*Ligustrum lucidum*) – Perennial evergreen shrub or small tree to 12 m., has attractive glossy simple leaves and clusters of fragrant white flowers. Mainly a problem in the northeastern parts of state, some have escaped near towns and along the Aransas, San Antonio, Guadalupe and Mission Rivers. Birds are fond of the berries.
- **Chinese Tallow** (*Sapium sebiferum*) – A shrub or small tree, leaves simple to 25 m., flowers or not significant. Fruit in capsules, 3-lobed, lobes rounded externally and flattened against each other. A native of China, known in this area for its attractive fall foliage, has reached plague

proportions along parts of the Texas Upper Coast. The plant has little value for wildlife. Escaped in this area forming colonies, eradication is highly desirable.

- **Japanese Honeysuckle** (*Lonicera japonica*) – Evergreen woody vine with climbing or sometimes trailing stems. Leaves ovate or oblong 3 – 8 cm., the fragrant nectar laden flowers attract insects and hummingbirds. Historically used for landscaping; produces numerous small black berries that are favored by birds. When waxwings eat honeysuckle berries their tail color change from yellow to red-orange. The plant is an aggressive exotic that has become a serious problem in southeastern North America, enjoys various soils and is drought and cold hardy. In this area can be found mainly in Aransas, Calhoun, and Refugio Counties.
- **Yellow Trumpet / Cat's-claw Vine** (*Macfadyena unguis-cati*) – An evergreen vine with glossy dark green leaves three-pinnate, claw like tendrils and attractive yellow flowers. Extremely aggressive, will rapidly take over the host's plants; these will die within a relatively short time. Originally used for landscaping, will thrive in various soils, cold and drought hardy. It has become an especially serious problem along the Mission River near Refugio and in Blucher Park, Corpus Christ. Insects and hummingbirds are attracted to the flowers, a native of Yucatan, Mexico.
- **Water-hyacinth** (*Eichhornia crassipes*) – An aquatic perennial to 45 cm., has ovate or nearly round leaves up to 15 cm., petioles usually inflated. Floats on surface of the water, has showy violet flowers. It is extremely aggressive, covers surface water areas on inland lakes, has no wildlife value.