



Salsola tragus

Chenopodiaceae
Russian thistle



SATR12

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

growth

Bushy annual, to 1 m tall, usually height +/- equal to width or taller than wide. Seed leaves 10-35 mm long.

stems

Stems slender, flexible, **typically with reddish-purple longitudinal striations**. Immature plants taller than wide, with lateral branches ascending and shorter than the mainstem.

leaves

Alternate, sessile, linear to needle-like, graduating into rigid, spine-tipped bracts in the inflorescences. Fleshy to leathery, 2-52 mm long, mostly 0.5-1 mm wide, sharp-pointed to spine-tipped. Foliage hairless or sparsely hairy.

flower

1 flowered (rarely 2-3, with lateral flowers mostly abortive). Petalless; Bracts +/- awl-shaped, reflexed. Typically male flowers develop in

fruit

early July. Sepal tips acute, +/- lax, not spine-like. Sepal wings fan-shaped, flat, 0.5-2.5 mm long, usually minutely toothed to scalloped along the margins, **translucent, often pinkish to deep red with conspicuous veins**, folded or open, overlapping at maturity, with membranous, minutely barbed margins.

4-10 mm diameter, including sepal wings. Sepal wings flat.



flower color

Elevation:
Up to 8860 feet

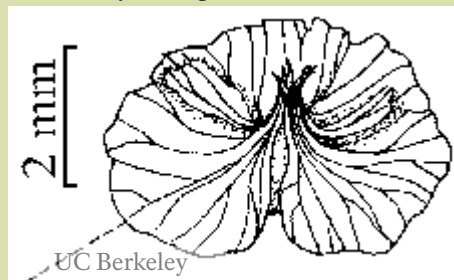
Ecotypes Invaded:
Dunes, desertlands, scrublands, grasslands & woodlands.

ECOLOGY & DISTRIBUTION

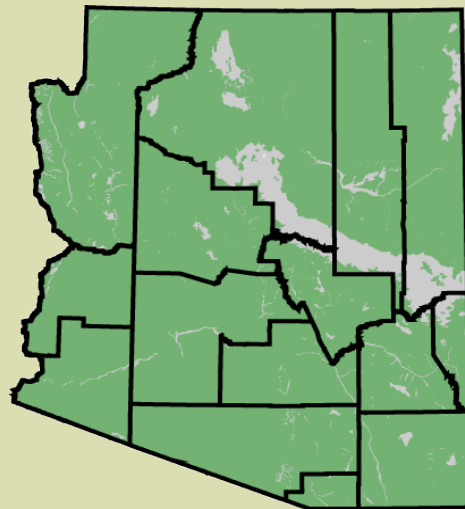
Found in disturbed habitats; roadsides, cultivated fields, coastal and riparian sands, semi-deserts, deserts & eroded slopes. Common throughout California, to eastern North America, and Mexico.

Plants become gray to brown. Main stems of Russian thistle break off at ground level under windy conditions allowing plants to disperse numerous seeds as they tumble. Skeletons persist for at least one year and are typically found along fences and other structures. *S. tragus* forms intermediates with *S. paulsenii*.

Fruit; calyx wings.



SUITABLE HABITAT



Suitable habitat based on the Arizona Wildlands Invasive Plant Working Group (AZ-WIPWG) assessment. Green = suitable habitat; White = unsuitable habitat; Gray = unknown. Based on Brown, Lowe & Pase (1980) vegetation communities.