Eastern Baccharis (*Baccharis halimifolia*) Identification and Control

Eastern baccharis, also known as groundsel tree, groundsel bush or saltbush, may go largely unnoticed until it blooms in the fall. Native to the Coastal Plain, it typically grows on the edges of tidal fresh and brackish marshes, back dunes, and in open forests. Its occurrence in pine plantations, pastures and disturbed areas appears to be on the rise, as does its occurrence beyond the Coastal Plain.

How do I identify eastern baccharis?

- **Form:** shrub to small tree, 5-12 feet tall (Figure 1), with one to several stems and numerous erect branches. Plants are dioecious, with separate male and female plants.
- **Leaves:** alternate, somewhat leathery, semi-evergreen, bright green to grayish green, 1 to 3 inches long and 1/4 to 2 inches wide, variable shape from diamond-shaped to oval or egg-shaped (Figure 2). Larger leaves are coarsely toothed on the upper half; smaller leaves near the tips of branches may have smooth margins.
- **Flowers:** September to October. Clusters of small white flowers at the ends of branches. As the flowers mature the female plants become quite showy, appearing almost to be covered with cotton.
- **Fruit:** October to November. Wind-dispersed seed with silky hairs (Figure 3).

Where does it grow? Eastern baccharis is typically found in open areas as the seed requires light to germinate. Fencerows, field margins, and disturbed areas are especially prone to invasion. Plants are tolerant of low nutrient soils, flooding, and salt.
How is eastern baccharis spread? Seeds, produced in prolific numbers, are dispersed by wind soon after ripening. Seed is viable for about one year.

Is eastern baccharis poisonous? Eastern baccharis is poisonous to cattle. As a semi-evergreen, it may be attractive to cattle when few other green forages are available. However, it is generally unpalatable and rarely a problem. This species is also poor to moderate for white-tail deer browse.

How can I control eastern baccharis? Eastern baccharis has been observed to be somewhat intolerant of fire. However, there is currently little information available to support this. Eastern baccharis will generally re-sprout following mechanical control. If stems are cut, apply triclopyr ester product (25% v/v) in oil as a cut stem treatment to the top and sides of the stump. Triclopyr ester is one the most effective herbicides for eastern baccharis control. It is effective as an individual plant treatment (IPT) using cut stump, basal bark, or foliar application methods. There are several triclopyr ester products available. Select one that is labeled for the site. In terms of other herbicides, glyphosate has not been effective for foliar treatment and has not been tested for cut stump treatment.

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<th>Herbicide Active Ingredient</th>
<th>Recommended for</th>
<th>Application method</th>
<th>Product Rate</th>
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<td>Remedy, Garlon 4, Element 4, and other generics</td>
<td>Triclopyr ester</td>
<td>Pastures, Forests, ROWs</td>
<td>Cut stump</td>
<td>25% v/v</td>
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<td>Basal bark</td>
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<td>Foliar IPT</td>
<td>2% v/v²</td>
<td>Water</td>
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¹See label for site specific information and application restrictions.
²Add a nonionic surfactant at 0.5% v/v or a crop oil concentrate at 1% v/v.

Sources:


Prepared by: Nancy J. Loewenstein, Research Fellow IV and Extension Specialist, School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences and Stephen F. Enloe, Extension Weed Specialist, Department of Crop Soil, and Environmental Sciences, Auburn University.