Athel Pine

Athel Pine (*Tamarix aphylla*) is a fast-growing tree native to the Mediterranean region, North Africa, and India. Introduced to Australia in the 1930s for shade and to help control erosion in arid regions, it has since been classified as a Weed of National Significance (WoNS).

What does it look like?

Athel Pine (*Tamarix aphylla*) is a fast-growing tree that grows to 15m. Its slender drooping branchlets appear jointed, but this look is due to small, scale-like leaves, 1-2mm long, that surround the stem.

In summer, it produces bell-shaped pink-white flowers, which contain numerous seeds.

Where is it found?

Athel Pine thrives in semi-arid and arid areas across inland Australia, including South Australia, Northern Territory, Queensland, Western Australia and New South Wales.

This tree is commonly found along river and creek riparian zones and has been widely planted in pastoral gardens, community areas and around water courses for shade and shelter.

The largest naturalised infestation occurs in the eastern SA Arid Lands (SAAL) region, where 50km of river and lake environments are infested.

Control work has been undertaken in some areas to prevent its spread.

What is its impact?

Athel Pine forms dense stands that outcompete native trees and understorey plants. Along waterways, it can alter the flow of watercourses, draw out more water than native vegetation lowering water tables, decrease pasture productivity and make mustering more difficult.

The tree's leaves excrete concentrated salt through specialised glands, increasing soil salinity beneath its canopy harming salt sensitive native vegetation.

Athel Pine is drought and fire resistant, making it particularly difficult to control once it has established.

What can you do?

The *Weed Control Handbook for Declared Plants in South Australia,* offers comprehensive advice on herbicide use and integrated weed management strategies to address Athel Pine infestations including the following methods:

Cut stump

For medium to larger trees, cut the stump as close to the ground as possible using a chainsaw. Within 10 seconds, apply a recommended herbicide mixture. Ensure you remove all cut material to prevent regrowth.

Basal bark

For smaller trees that have not developed rough bark, clear an area around the base of the tree, then spray all sides of the stem with a herbicide mix up to 750mm above ground level. This can be done at any time of the year.

Foliar spray

For smaller plants under 2m, spray the entire plant with a recommended herbicide mix. This method can be used year-round.

Physical

Bulldozers or loaders will be needed to remove large trees or dense infestations,

and this should be done after first seeking advice on Water Affecting Activities and a Native Vegetation Clearance permit.

A blade plough can be used to cut roots 30-50cm below the soil surface to prevent regrowth, taking care to avoid surrounding vegetation. Follow up inspections and hand-pulling of seedlings will be required for ongoing control.

What are your responsibilities?

As a WoNS weed, Athel Pine must be actively controlled to prevent its spread. Landholders are responsible for removing Athel Pine from their properties, particularly within 100m of any watercourse. It is illegal to sell or transport Athel Pine or any contaminated materials. Regular monitoring of known infestations and prompt action to control new growth is essential to protect native vegetation and prevent the species from spreading further. and harming native vegetation.

More information

Email: saal.landscapeboard@sa.gov.au
Phone: 08 8429 9666

www.landscape.sa.gov.au/saal