



Iceplant

What is iceplant?

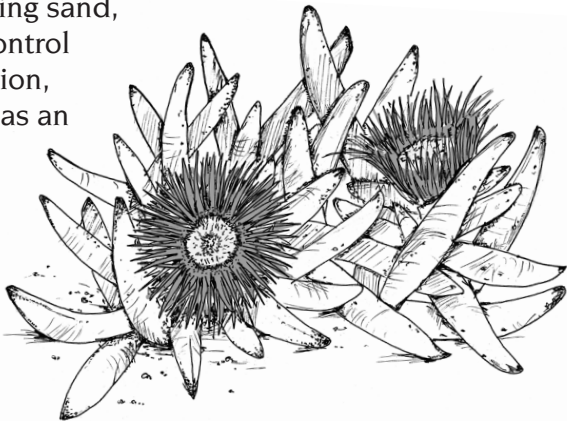
Iceplant is found on the California coast, along roads, and in landscapes under 500 feet in elevation. The two species of iceplant commonly seen in California occur naturally only in South Africa. Known there as fig marigold or Hottentot fig, its fruit is dried or made into jams, and the gelatinous juice inside its leaves has been used for medicinal purposes.

What does it look like?

Iceplant is easily identified by its thick, three-sided, spear-shaped, succulent green leaves. Each spear is 4-5 inches long. Iceplant is usually seen as a dense carpet of green spears covering extensive areas. The spring flowers are 2-6 inches across and colored white, yellow, pink or deep magenta.

How did it get here?

Iceplant was originally brought to California in the early 1900s for stabilizing soil along railroad tracks; it was later used to hold drifting sand, to control erosion, and as an



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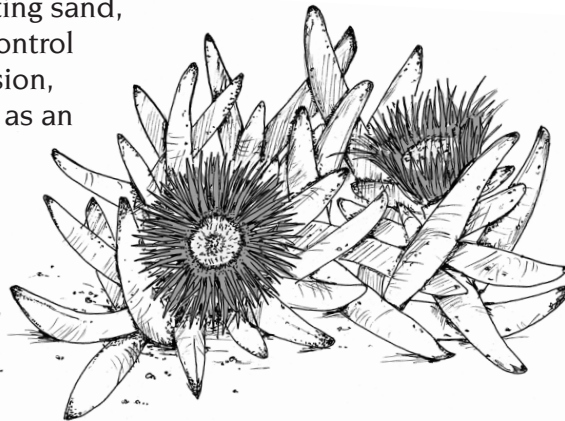
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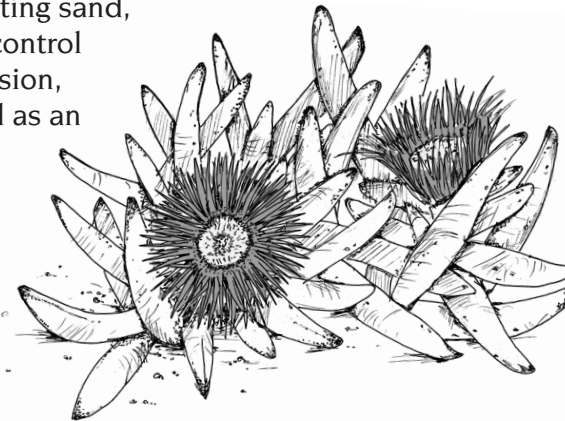
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ornamental home garden plant. Thousands of acres of iceplant were planted along roads and highways and in freeway medians as late as the 1970s.

Why is it a problem?

A resilient, drought resistant plant, iceplant is known for “creeping”—forming roots at every node that contacts the ground and creating deep mats of vegetation, quickly invading large areas and competing with native plants for space and light. Because iceplant is a succulent, it takes and stores water and nutrients from the soil, making survival much more difficult for native plants. Iceplant can build up organic matter in sandy soils, permitting other non-native plants to invade. Native animals use native plants for food and shelter. When iceplant and other non-native species dominate an area, much less natural habitat is available for wildlife. Once iceplant is established, very few other plants can survive in the same area.

California's natural ecosystems are made up of native species. Iceplant crowds out native plants—reducing plant diversity and destroying habitat for native wildlife—and changes the natural processes of beaches and dunes.

How can you help?

- Do not plant iceplant along the coastline and in other areas where it can escape and spread into wildlands.
- Consider joining a group of volunteers to remove non-native plants from parks and other wildlands.
- Do not transport or dispose of pieces of iceplant in areas where they might take root, creating new areas of infestation.

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