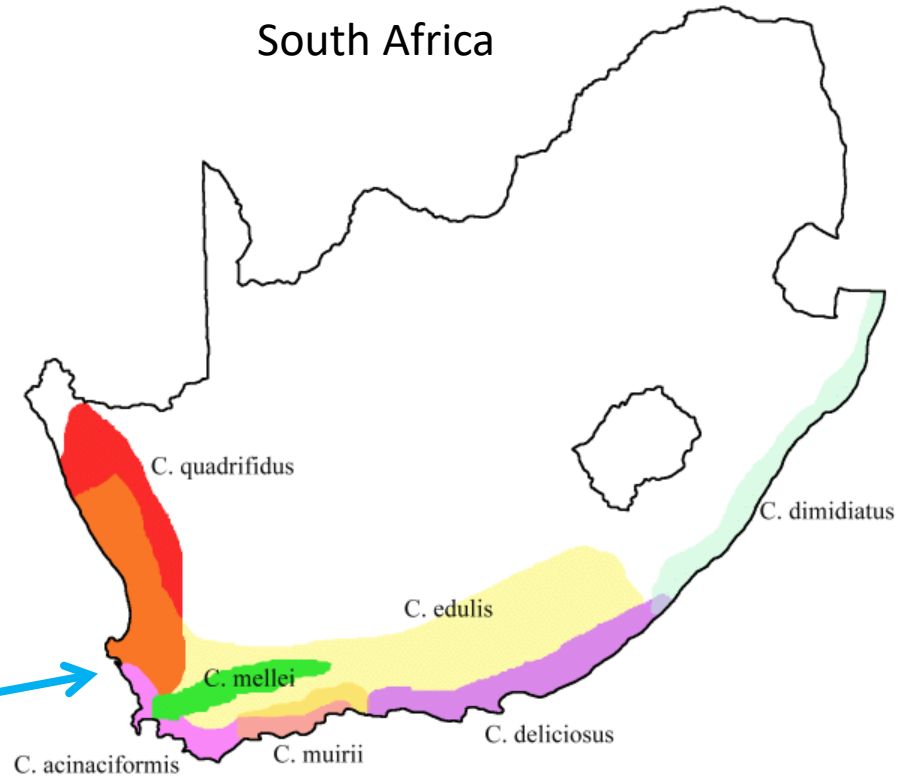
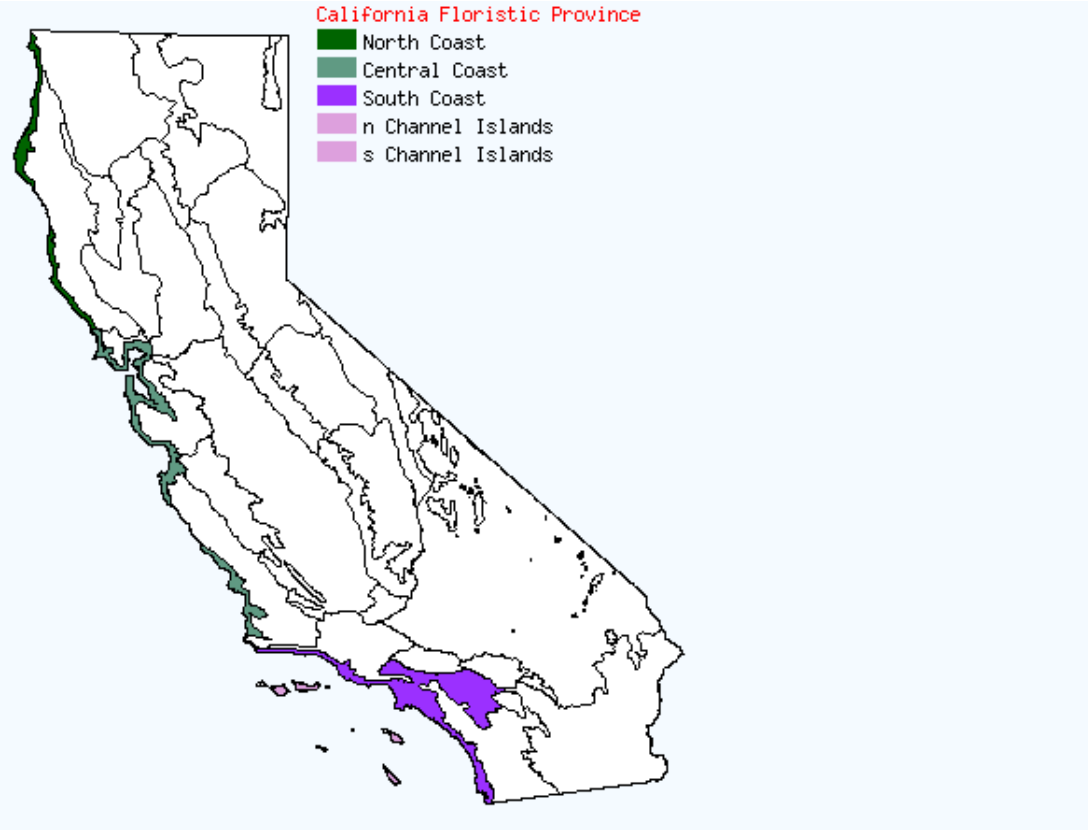
South African Ice Plant: Threat or Menace?

Native to South Africa



Invasive in California



Native flora vs. South African ice plant

Ecological Characteristics

Native Plants

- Non-invasive
- High diversity: >10 species
- Supports local animals, including pollinators
- Deep roots to hold bluff soils in place
- Thin, light-weight leaves do not weigh down bluffs

South African Ice Plant

- Invasive
- Low diversity: one species
- Does not support diversity of local animals
- Shallow roots do not hold soils in place
- Heavy, water-logged leaves weigh down bluffs

Proponents for So. African Ice Plant Removal

Government Agencies

- Bureau of Land Management
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- California State Parks
- National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Sanctuaries
- University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources (Extension)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

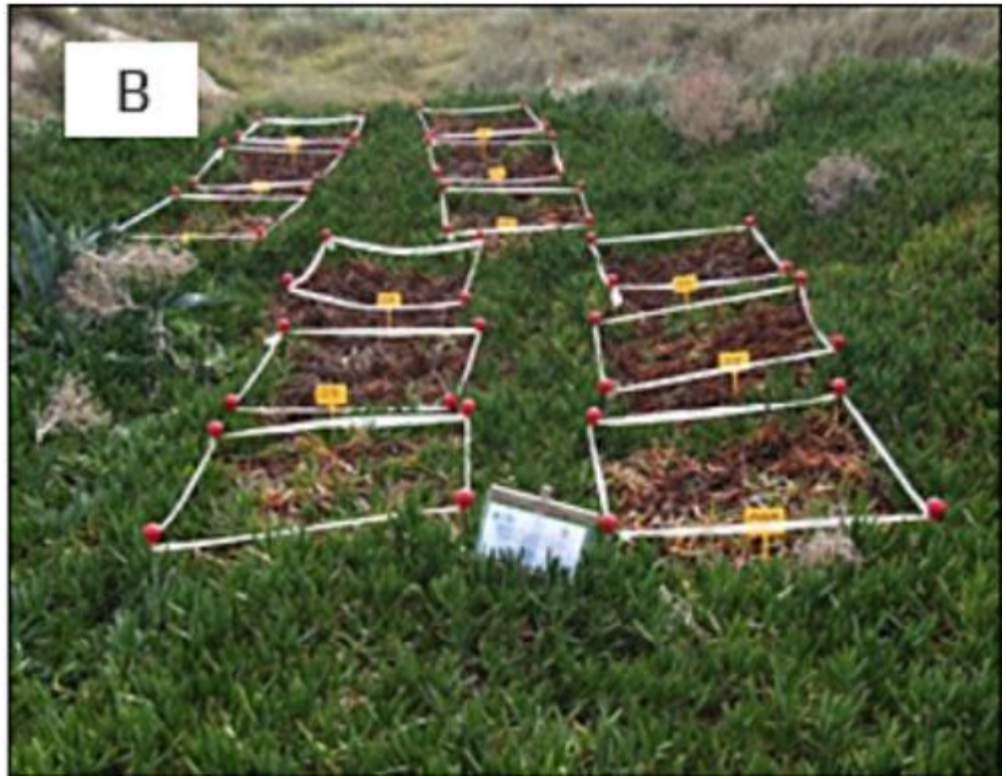
Non-Profit Organizations

- California Invasive Plant Council
- California Native Plant Society
- Central Coast State Parks Association
- Morro Bay National Estuary Program
- The Bay Foundation
- The Nature Conservancy

Methods for Removing South African ice plant

Chemical:

- Spray with herbicides
- Might be necessary for very large-scale invasions
- Potentially exposes public to herbicides
- Not advised at coast or near waterways
- Economical



Methods for Removing South African ice plant

Solarization:

- Cover with layer of weighted plastic sheeting for months
- No chemical use or hauling away dead plants
- Unsightly for months; requires extensive public education to prevent vandalism
- Volunteer labor makes it economical

Methods for Removing South African ice plant

Mechanical:

- Fun volunteer project
- Must be repeated or will regrow
- Hauling is expensive: ~$10,000 per semi-truck load of ice plant


Lampton Cliffs Park