

LESSER SALTSCALE (ATRIPLEX MINUSCULA)

California Native Plant Society List 1B



Description

Lesser salt scale is an annual plant belonging to the goosefoot family (Chenopodiaceae). It has many upright,

reddish stems with spreading, brittle branches. The leaves are egg-shaped, white-scaly below and green above, with entire (smooth) margins. The leaves and branches are arranged alternately, which distinguishes this species from brittle scale (*Atriplex depressa*) and subtle orache (*A. subtilis*). The male and female structures are produced in separate flowers, with the male flowers on the upper part of the stem and females near the base of the same plant. Lesser salt scale flowers from May to October.

Habitat

It grows on sandy soils in alkaline areas, often in association with slough systems and river floodplains, but is not found in areas that remain wet year-round.

Range/distribution

In the San Joaquin Valley, lesser salt scale has been reported from Merced, Madera, Fresno, and Tulare counties.

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References

- Taylor, D., and D.H. Wilken. 1993. *Atriplex*. Pages 501-505 in *The Jepson manual: higher plants of California* (J.C. Hickman, editor). University of California Press, Berkeley, CA, 1400 pp.
- Tibor, D.P., editor. 2001. *California Native Plant Society's Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants of California*. Sixth edition. California Native Plant Society, Sacramento, 387 pp.