

The California Invasive Plant Council Student Chapter recommends that you

DON'T PLANT

FENNEL



Photos: Gary Monroe

Scientific Name: *Foeniculum vulgare*

Other Common Names: Anise, Sweet Fennel, Aniseed, Sweet Anise

Description:

Fennel is a perennial herb easily recognized by its strong licorice scent from the stems and leaves. Leaves are finely dissected giving them a feathery appearance. Plants can reach 4-10 feet in height and produce umbel flowers of yellowish green.

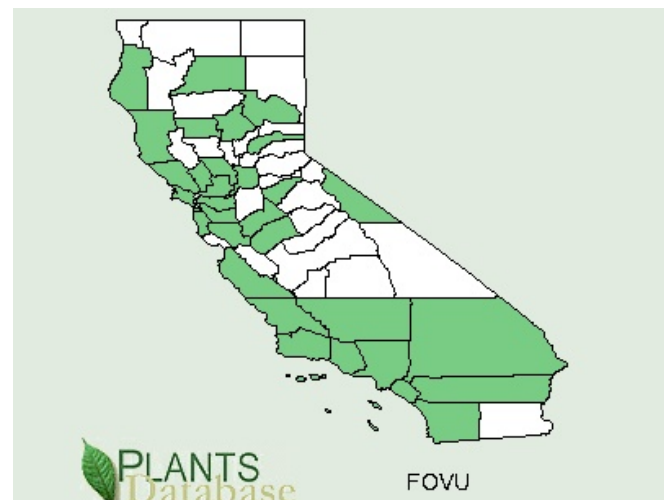
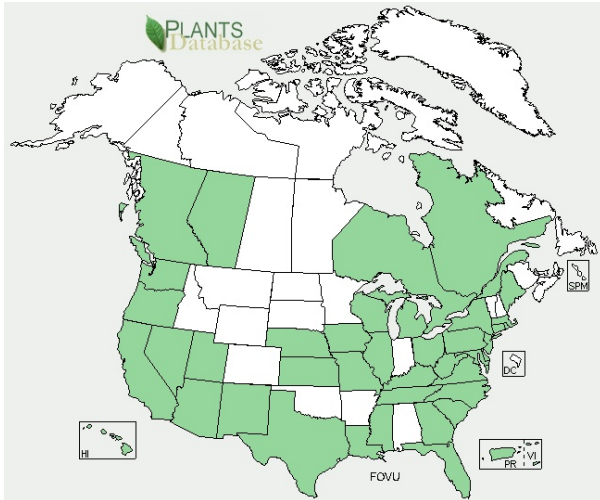
Biology, Habitat, and Spread:

Fennel is most commonly found in disturbed habitats, but also found in undisturbed mesic areas, grasslands and coastal sage scrub. It prefers acidic soils, but can tolerate slightly basic soils. Once established, fennel forms dense stands with the ability to displace native plant species. Plants can reproduce by resprouting from the root crown, or by seeds, which are dispersed by rodents and birds.

Impact:

Fennel displaces native vegetation quickly becoming the dominant plant of the community. Large populations of this plant provide poor quality habitat compared to native vegetation.

Native Range: Europe and the Mediterranean
Invaded Range:



Control Methods:

Mechanical removal is most effective; however, it is important that soil disturbance is kept to a minimum to prevent reinvasion. Mowing and cutting will temporarily reduce plant height, but will not remove or reduce the population. Garlon 3A and Garlon 4A application can remove up to 100 percent cover; while, Roundup in early spring can reduce cover up to 80 percent.

Alternatives:



Lemon Beebrush
Aloysia triphylla

Lemon verbena resembles fennel in its tall, loose foliage, but is not invasive. It also provides a sweet lemon sent giving the garden a welcoming aroma. Best grown in full sun, it reaches heights of 4-6 feet tall and 6-8 feet in width. White blooms occur late summer or early fall.

Photo: www.littleherbhouse.com



Purple Majesty Ornamental Millet
Pennisetum glaucum

Purple Majesty produces long spikes of purple with yellow flowers surrounded by purple corn like leaves. This species is a fast growing bunch grass reaching heights of 6 feet. Best growth will occur in course to medium soils with neutral to low levels of acidity. It is moderately drought tolerant.

Photo: USDA-ARS



Bamboo Muhly
Muhlenbergia dumosa

For a feathery look more similar to Fennel, Bamboo Muhly can be substituted. It is a full sun grass that grows in clumps up to 6 feet in height and is not invasive. This evergreen plant will produce magenta flowers late summer to mid fall. It is drought tolerant and can handle soils with mild alkalinity.

Photo: www.magnoliagardensnursery.com

References:

California Invasive Plant Council: www.cal-ipc.org
Natural Resources Conservation Service Plant Database: www.plant.usda.gov
Magnolia gardens Nursery: www.magnoliagardensnursery.com
Davesgarden.com