

The California Invasive Plant Council Student Chapter recommends that you

# DON'T PLANT ICE PLANT



Photos: [www.plantright.org](http://www.plantright.org)

**Scientific Name:** *Carpobrotus chilensis* and *Carpobrotus edulis*

**Other Common Names:** Hottentot fig

## **Description:**

This vigorous groundcover forms impenetrable mats that compete directly with native vegetation, including several rare and threatened plants. Small mammals can carry seeds of iceplant from landscape settings to nearby natural areas. Pieces of the plant can be washed into storm drains and into natural areas where they become established.

## **Biology, Habitat, and Spread:**

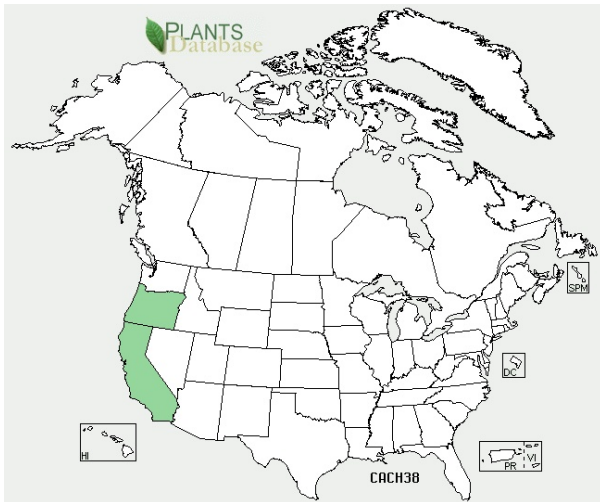
Highway iceplant is a ground-hugging succulent perennial that roots at the nodes, has a creeping habit, and often forms deep mats covering large areas. Shallow, fibrous roots are produced at every node that is in contact with the soil. Highway iceplant has been widely planted for soil stabilization and landscaping, and is well known by most Californians for its succulent three-sided leaves and its propensity to form deep mats and continuous stands. In California flowering occurs throughout the year, peaking in late spring and early summer.

## **Impact:**

Native to coastal areas of South Africa, a region with a Mediterranean climate similar to that of coastal California, highway iceplant was brought to California in the early 1900s for stabilizing soil along railroad tracks. It was later used by Caltrans for similar purposes, and until the 1970s thousands of acres were planted with iceplant. For several decades it was also widely promoted as an ornamental plant for home gardens, and it is still available at

**Native Range:** South Africa

**Invaded Range:**



**Control Methods:**

Iceplant removal projects usually focus on pulling plants out of the ground by hand. Roots must be removed and all parts of the plant must be taken from the site to prevent resprouting.

**Alternatives:**



***Ivy geranium***  
***Pelargonium peltatum***

Glossy, bright green leaves with flowers in white, pink, rose, red, and lavender. Vigorous groundcover recommended for flat areas only, not suitable for erosion control.

Photo: David Graper



***Ivory star jasmine***  
***Trachelospermum spp.***

Evergreen, vining groundcover up to 20' across. It has glossy, dark green leaves and pale yellow, pinwheel-shaped flowers with a jasmine scent.

Photo: www.aromaticas.es



***Beach strawberry***  
***Fragaria chiloensis***

Forms lush compact mat 4"-6" high. Glossy dark green leaves, white flowers. Mow or cut back annually to force new growth.

Photo: Ken Gilliland

**References:**

Cal-IPC. 2008. California Invasive Plant Council: [www.cal-ipc.org](http://www.cal-ipc.org)  
NPS. 2008. Redwood National Park and State Parks: <http://www.nps.gov/redw/>  
US Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service: <http://plants.usda.gov/>