

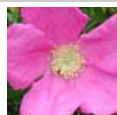


Invasive Plant Atlas of New England

Catalog of Species Search Results



[:: Catalog of Species Search](#)



Kochia scorparia

(Summer cypress
Common kochia
Fireweed
Mexican fireweed
Mock cypress)

[Common Name\(s\)](#) | [Full Scientific Name](#) | [Family Name Common](#) | [Family Scientific Name](#) | [Images](#) | [Synonyms](#) | [Description](#) | [Similar Species](#) | [Reproductive/Dispersal Mechanisms](#) | [Distribution](#) | [History of Introduction in New England](#) | [Habitats in New England](#) | [Threats](#) | [Early Warning Notes](#) | [Management Links](#) | [Documentation Needs](#) | [Additional Information](#) | [References](#) | [Data Retrieval](#) | [Maps of New England Plant Distribution](#)

COMMON NAME

Summer cypress
Common kochia
Fireweed
Mexican fireweed
Mock cypress

FULL SCIENTIFIC NAME

Kochia scorparia (L.) Schrad.

FAMILY NAME COMMON

Goosefoot family

FAMILY SCIENTIFIC NAME

Chenopodiaceae

IMAGES



Habit

NOMENCLATURE/SYNONYMS

Synonyms: *Bassia scoparia* (L.) A.J. Scott
Bassia sieversiana (Pallas) W.A. Weber
Kochia alata Bates
Kochia sieversiana (Pallas) C.A. Mey.
Kochia trichophila Stapf

DESCRIPTION

Botanical Glossary

Kochia scoparia is a bushy annual that grows to about 1.5 m (5 ft.) in height. The plant is covered in soft hairs. The leaves are sessile, narrowly lanceolate and often pubescent. The apex of the leaf is acuminate. The leaves measure 2.5-5 cm (1-2 in.) in length and 2-4 mm (0.08-0.2 in.) in width. They gradually become smaller towards the top of the plant.

Kochia scoparia flowers from July to September. The inconspicuous flowers are sessile and located in the upper bracts of the plant, forming spikes that measure 5-10 mm (0.2-0.4 in.) long. The spikes are covered in long, soft hairs. The star-shaped calyx is 2.5 mm (0.1 in.) wide when mature. The calyx segments, when fruiting, each have a short triangular wing that covers the fruit. The dull brown seeds are small, measuring 1.5 mm (0.06 in.) wide.

Page References Bailey 353, Fernald 591, Gleason & Cronquist 99, Holmgren 90, Magee & Ahles 451. See reference section below for full citations.

SIMILAR SPECIES

Bassia hyssopifolia (Pallas) Kuntz (smotherweed)
Bassia hirsuta (L.) Aschers. (hairy smotherweed)

The leaves of *Bassia hyssopifolia* are more blunt and shorter than those of *Kochia scoparia*. The stems of *B. hyssopifolia* are whitish, while those of *K. scoparia* tend to be reddish in color.

Bassia hirsuta is typically much shorter than *Kochia scoparia* and has a more arcuate, less upright, habit. Its leaves also tend to be wider and are shorter than those of *K. scoparia*.

REPRODUCTIVE/DISPERSAL MECHANISMS

Kochia scoparia reproduces by copious seed production. The seeds are dispersed mechanically; both wind and water constitute effective means of seed dispersal. The plants themselves can even roll in a manner similar to a tumbleweed. Once dispersed, its seeds are short-lived in the soil; however, they tend to germinate early, and the resulting seedlings have a high degree of vigor.

DISTRIBUTION

Kochia scoparia is native to Eurasia. It is presently found throughout the U.S., with the exception of the southeastern states and Arkansas. It is also common in Quebec and the prairie provinces of Canada. It is most invasive in the western United States, where it has become a serious agricultural weed. It has been reported in all of the states of New England.

HISTORY OF INTRODUCTION IN NEW ENGLAND

The precise timing of *Kochia scoparia's* introduction to New England is unclear. It was most likely introduced as a garden plant, cultivated for its attractive fall foliage. Robinson (1908) described it as "locally established as a weed." Early records from Connecticut (1907 to 1912) place it in waste ground, roadsides, in a yard as a garden escapee, and on the edge of a salt marsh. Fernald (1950) describes it as having "spread from cultivation" from New England toward the West and South.

HABITATS IN NEW ENGLAND

Abandoned Field
Agricultural Field
Coastal Grassland
Edge
Open Disturbed Area
Pasture
Salt Marsh
Vacant Lot
Yard or Garden

Kochia scoparia is mostly found along the coast, in disturbed sites, along roadsides, and in grassy fields. Since it is both drought and salt tolerant, it is found in sandy areas and along the edges of salt marshes. It can also be found along waterways and on floodplains (this is more common out West), particularly in more disturbed areas.

THREATS

Kochia scoparia can be a rapid colonizer in high light situations, and has the ability to suppress native species in such habitats. It has some degree of allelopathy. It can be toxic to cattle if grazed heavily.

MANAGEMENT LINKS

[Saskatchewan Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization](#)

DOCUMENTATION NEEDS

Documentation required: A specific photograph or mounted snippet of the inflorescence.

Best time for documentation: Summer, fall.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Integrated Taxonomic Information System

Taxonomic information

The PLANTS Database

General information and map

USDA Fire Effects Information System

A wide variety of information including a description, ecology and other aspects of the species

University of California Statewide Integrated Pest Management Project

A brief description and images

Saskatchewan Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization

Brief description and control methods

REFERENCES

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DATA RETRIEVAL

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- Formatted display as table
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MAPS OF PLANT DISTRIBUTION IN NEW ENGLAND

Select a study area by clicking the radio button and then click "Submit Selection."

- The whole New England area
- One or more states
- One or more counties
- One or more towns (county sub-divisions)

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