Baccharis halimifolia Salt Bush, Groundsel Bush

Introduction
Salt bush is native to coastal and interior wetlands and is most often seen invading this type of landscape (Fig. 1). It is often seen in its native habitat with wax myrtle in wet sites. The whitish flowers and fruits bring this rarely-noticed plant into view in the fall landscape. The 2-inch-long leaves and shrubby habit allow it to blend into the background in most landscapes. Seeds are poisonous if they are eaten.

General Information
Scientific name: Baccharis halimifolia
Pronunciation: BACK-uh-riss hal-lim-if-FOLE-ee-uh
Common name(s): Salt bush, groundsel bush
Family: Compositae
Plant type: shrub
USDA hardiness zones: 5 through 10 (Fig. 2)
Planting month for zone 7: year round
Planting month for zone 8: year round
Planting month for zone 9: year round
Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round
Origin: native to Florida
Uses: hedge; specimen; border; mass planting; small parking lot islands (< 100 square feet in size); medium-sized parking lot islands (100-200 square feet in size); large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size)
Availability: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

Description
Height: 8 to 12 feet
Spread: 6 to 12 feet
Plant habit: vase shape; round
Plant density: moderate
Growth rate: moderate
Texture: fine

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**Foliage**

- Leaf arrangement: alternate
- Leaf type: simple
- Leaf margin: dentate
- Leaf shape: obovate
- Leaf venation: none, or difficult to see
- Leaf type and persistence: deciduous
- Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches
- Leaf color: silver/gray
- Fall color: no fall color change
- Fall characteristic: not showy

**Flower**

- Flower color: white
- Flower characteristic: fall flowering

**Fruit**

- Fruit shape: oval
- Fruit length: less than .5 inch
- Fruit cover: dry or hard
- Fruit color: white
- Fruit characteristic: showy

**Trunk and Branches**

- Trunk/bark/branches: not particularly showy; can be trained to grow with a short, single trunk; typically multi-trunked or clumping stems
- Current year stem/twig color: brown
- Current year stem/twig thickness: thin

**Culture**

- Light requirement: plant grows in full sun
- Soil tolerances: extended flooding; acidic; slightly alkaline; sand; clay; loam
- Drought tolerance: moderate
- Soil salt tolerances: good
- Plant spacing: 36 to 60 inches

**Other**

- Roots: not applicable
- Winter interest: plant has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers
- Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding
- Invasive potential: native plant that often reproduces into nearby landscapes
- Pest resistance: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

**Use and Management**

Salt bush is rarely planted by designers and horticulturists, perhaps because it is too ‘common’ in native stands. A useful shrub or small tree for reclaiming wet sites, Salt-bush could be used more frequently near retention basins and drainage ditches. It has a good tolerance to brackish water. It is well suited for planting in wet sites throughout the state. With proper care to remove recurring dead wood, nice small-tree specimens can be created. These can become nice additions to many landscape. They come into flower and are attractive at a time when few other small trees and shrubs are flowering.

**Pests and Diseases**

No serious pests or diseases appear to affect this plant.