

Carpobrotus edulis Ice Plant¹

Edward F. Gilman²

Introduction

A common road-side ground cover in California, few test plantings of ice plant have been tried in Florida. There is at least one planting in Clearwater. Those in California grow nicely in full sun in hot conditions. The plant stays low to the ground or will cascade over a retaining wall. Flowers are produced on a regular basis.



Figure 1. Full Form—*Carpobrotus edulis*: Ice Plant
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General Information

Scientific name: *Carpobrotus edulis*

Pronunciation: kar-poe-BROE-tus ED-yoo-liss

Common name(s): ice plant, hottentot fig

Family: *Aizoaceae*



Figure 2. Leaf—*Carpobrotus edulis*: Ice Plant
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Figure 3. Flower—*Carpobrotus edulis*: Ice Plant
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Plant type: ground cover

USDA hardiness zones: 7B through 11 (Figure 4)



Figure 4. Shaded area represents potential planting range.
Credits: undefined

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 Africa

Invasive potential: aggressive, spreading plant

Uses: ground cover

Availability: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

Description

Height: ½ to 1 feet

Spread: depends upon supporting structure

Plant habit: prostrate (flat); spreading

Plant density: dense

Growth rate: fast

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: lanceolate

Leaf venation: none, or difficult to see

Leaf type and persistence: evergreen

Leaf blade length: less than 2 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: pink; yellow

Flower characteristic: summer flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: unknown

Fruit length: unknown

Fruit cover: unknown

Fruit color: unknown

Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not applicable

Current year stem/twig color: green

Current year stem/twig thickness: very thick

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in full sun

Soil tolerances: sand; loam; acidic; loam

Drought tolerance: high

Soil salt tolerances: unknown

Plant spacing: 24 to 36 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding

Pest resistance: very sensitive to one or more pests or diseases which can affect plant health or aesthetics

Use and Management

Ice plants are regularly irrigated in the California desert climate. However, in Florida, root rot may be the greatest concern in an irrigated landscape. You might try locating it in a place where drainage is exceptionally good (on a sandy ridge) and where irrigation does not reach.

Pests and Diseases

The plant has not been tested well enough in Florida to report on pest or disease problems.