

Athel pine, *Salt Cedar*, *athel*

Tamarix aphylla, known by its common name athel in Arabic, is a shrub or small tree native to Mediterranean climatic zones from north Africa to southeast Asia. This species, which can be found throughout Saudi Arabia, reaches a height of between 6 and 15 metres. It is a fast-growing tree, sometimes confused with *Casuarina equisetifolia*, since both are planted on farms in the Ar-riyadh region as a windbreak and to demarcate fields. Its shape is often irregular, multi-stemmed and crooked. The foliage is deciduous, and from green to light grey in colour. The leaves are imbricate, entire and squamate. The pale-yellow to pale-pink flowers appear in spring. The single flower is small, but together in long racemes the flowers stand out on the branches. The fruits are small capsules with 0.5-mm seeds. Propagation is best by seed, suckers and cuttings. *Tamarix aphylla* has a deep, extensive root system. It grows in any soil, especially salt marshes and sandy or silty soil. This tree is highly salt-tolerant, itself exuding salt, which accumulates in crusted layers on the foliage and drips onto the ground around the tree. Prone to leaf canker and frost-resistant, *T. aphylla* prefers locations next to watercourses, which improves its appearance, growth and shape. It can be planted as a specimen or dominant plant, and as a hedge. For open country, it is invaluable as a windbreak, screen and as a coloniser, for slope or river bank stabilisation, hillside planting and for environmental consolidation. In certain locations, it can become invasive.



GENERAL

Origin	: Mediterranean
Vigour	: fairly fast growing
Humidity	: extremely arid, very arid, semi-arid, semi-humid
Propagation	: sowing and pricking out, cuttings
Maintenance	: moderate

CONDITIONS

Urban climate	: resistant
Dessication	: resistant
Stagnant water	: resistant
Irrigation	: low
Salinity/ppm	: very high (20000 ppm)
Hardiness	: -15°C

SHAPE

Type	: tree, shrub
Height	: 6 m-15 m
Spread	: 6 m-12 m
Foliage	: deciduous

FLOWER

Colour	: pale yellow
Size	: 0.6 cm
Period	: April - June

FRUIT

Type of fruit	: capsule
Fruit size	: 0.5 cm