

Saltbush, *Orache*, *raghal*

There are some ten species of *Atriplex* growing presently in Saudi Arabia: seven are native (*Atriplex coriacea*, *A. dimorphostegia*, *A. farinosa*, *A. glauca*, *A. halimus*, *A. leuoclada* and *A. tatarica*), and three have been introduced and cultivated (*A. canescens*, *A. semibaccata* and *A. suberecta*). *Atriplex* is a halophytic plant which has developed various strategies to adapt to saline environments with excessively high salt content in the soil. Originating in the Mediterranean basin, *A. leuoclada*, known in Arabic as *raghal*, is a low perennial shrub with upright grey stems and triangular leaves and densely clustered, bell-shaped flowers and fruits, which appear on spikes in spring. The shrub grows in many different habitats, but it usually occurs on sabkah, coastal and inland salt marshes with a high accumulation of salts, and occasionally on silty soils. Frost-tolerant with a medium growth rate, the species is polymorphic, meaning that the shape and size of its leaves may vary according to season and habitat. *A. leuoclada* is an important species for agricultural use in arid regions. *Atriplex* species can be planted for soil desalination, and CO₂ sequestration. Studies have shown that *Atriplex* is able to survive sodium chloride salinity up to more than 100% of seawater salinity, indicating that *A. leuoclada* can be grown productively at moderate salinity. It is a useful plant for desert and extensive landscape schemes as a groundcover, occasionally requiring watering and maintenance to improve its appearance.



GENERAL

Origin	: Mediterranean
Humidity	: extremely arid, very arid, semi-arid
Propagation	: direct sowing
Maintenance	: low

CONDITIONS

Urban climate	: resistant
Dessication	: resistant
Stagnant water	: vulnerable
Irrigation	: none, low
Salinity/ppm	: very high (30000 ppm)
Hardiness	: -6°C

SHAPE

Type	: sub-shrub
Height	: 0.5 m
Spread	: 1 m
Foliage	: evergreen

FLOWER

Colour	: pale green
Period	: April - April

FRUIT

Type of fruit	: capsule
Fruit size	: 0.6 cm