

Invasive plant growth and fires on Santa Catalina Island, CA

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Earth Camp for Educators 2013



The Power of Perspective

Artist's view of a U.S. Landsat satellite. Credits: NASA.

Catalina Island, off the coast of Southern CA, is home to more than 76 highly invasive plants.

Left unmanaged, these invaders would overtake native habitats, potentially dooming some plants to extinction, and harming animals that rely on them for shelter and food.

Non-native plants grow faster than Catalina natives and compete for sunlight, water and nutrients, crowding natives out.

My family works with the Catalina Habitat Restoration and Improvement Program (CHIRP) to collect native seeds for restoring native habitats and to identify patches of invasive plants every June and July, since 2008, as our 'volunteer vacation'.

FOLLOW CHIRP'S WAR ON WEEDS

Top Priority Species

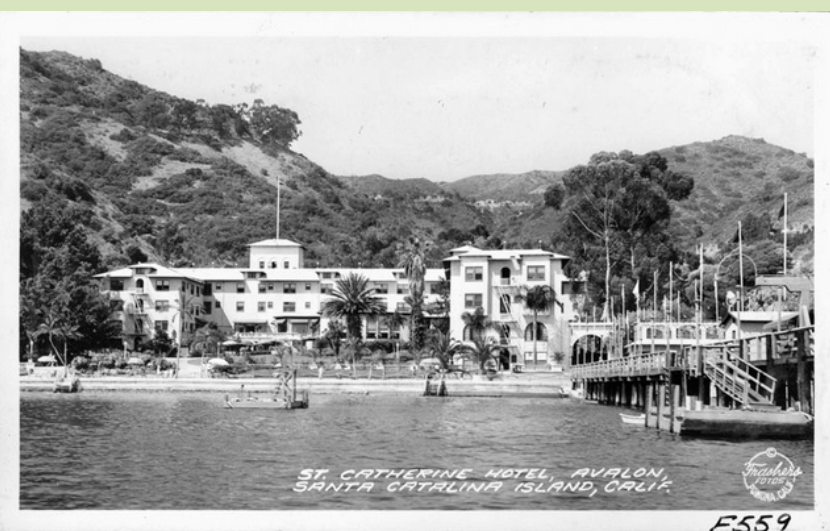
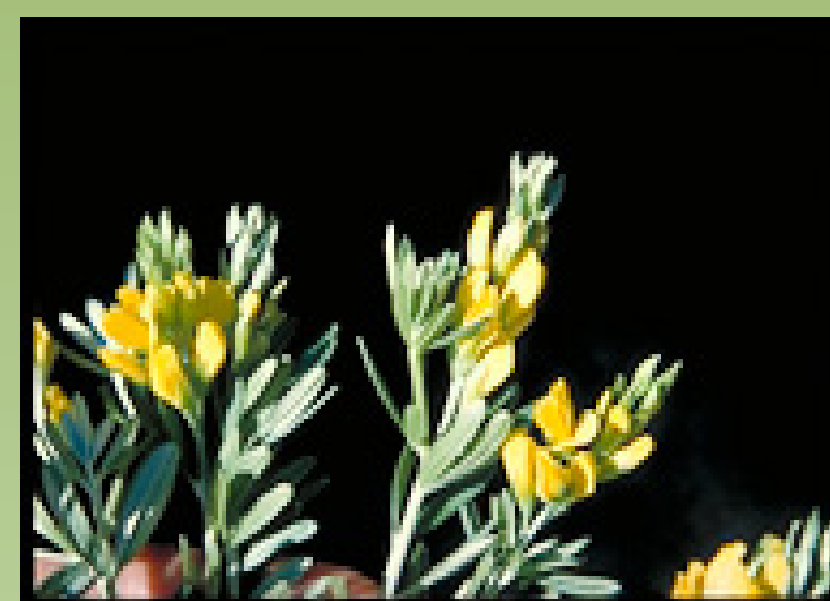
- Corratia seloana
- Genista monspessulana
- Elythra ca lycina
- Glybium marianum
- Ficus co nca
- Spartium junceum
- Genista linifolia
- Tamarix ramosissima

Navigation options:

- Priority Species with Limited Distribution
- Top Priority Species
- Trees
- Hybrids
- Surveyed Areas 2010
- Surveyed Areas 2011
- Surveyed Areas 2012

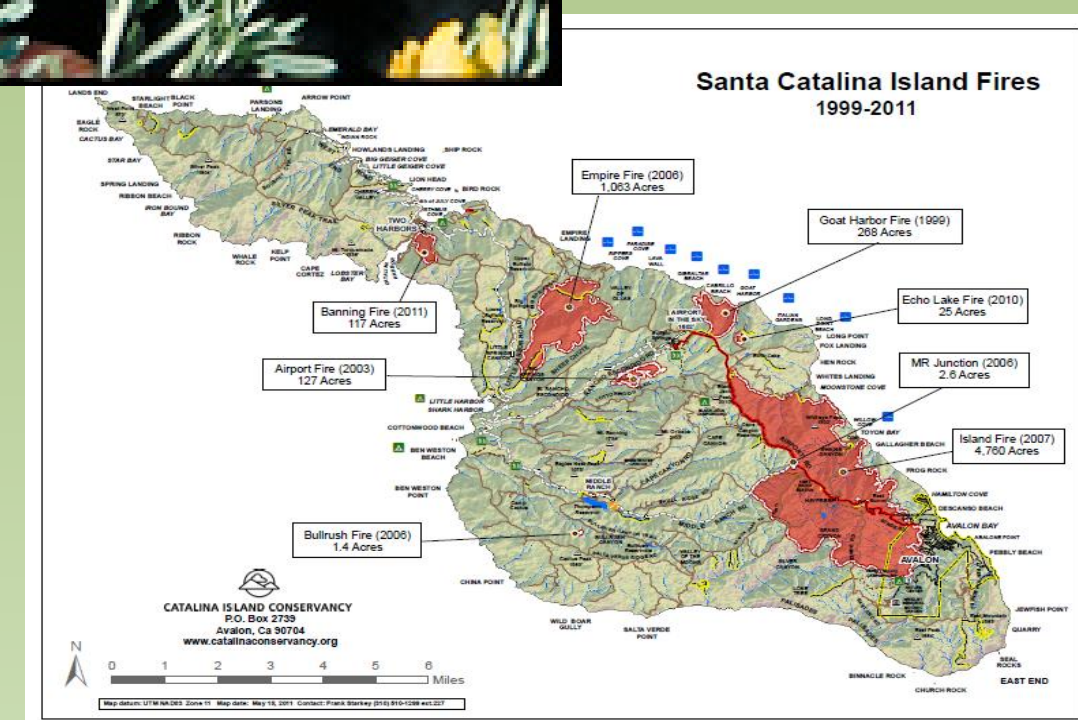
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One of the most virulent non-native invasive plants on Catalina Island includes flax leaf broom (*Genista linifolia*). *Genista's* 3-8 seeds explode from each pod with a 4 meter radius. Ants, birds, mammals and wind further disperse the seeds which may lay dormant up to 40 years in the soil until germinated by intense heat (from fire) and adequate precipitation.



A common tale of invasion:

In 1920, the Banning Brothers brought 2 *Genista* shrubs to decorate the Hotel Saint Catherine on Descanso Beach. Following the November 29, 1915 arson fire in Avalon, the soil was healthy for germination of *Genista* seeds. Today there are over 10,000 *Genista* plants on the island.



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