



ARIZONA-SONORA
DESERT
MUSEUM

ARIZONA-SONORA DESERT MUSEUM PLANT CARE INFORMATION

Fourwing Saltbush or Chamiso *Atriplex canescens*

DESCRIPTION: A very fast-growing evergreen shrub from 3-6 feet tall by 4-8 feet wide. The dense foliage is greenish-gray with a silvery cast. The flowers are insignificant; male and female on separate plants. After flowering, the female plants produce papery-thin, 4-winged fruit. These unique fruit are initially a wonderful chartreuse color, eventually drying to brown. The seeds are a favorite source of food for birds and small mammals. Four wing saltbush is very easy to grow, and is often one of the first plants to establish in disturbed areas. The species is native to most of the arid west. Its range spreads north into Canada and south to Mexico, and it is found from sea level to 8000 feet in elevation.

RECOMMENDED USE: Good for a fast screen or wildlife shelter. Provides great cover for many species of small birds. Quail and other ground-dwelling animals such as rabbits and lizards are fond of it. The foliage makes a large gray background against which to display green plants. To reduce potential invasiveness, plant it on the perimeter of landscaped areas, where water is usually less abundant. In addition to providing food and shelter for wildlife, Fourwing saltbush is useful for erosion control.

CULTURE:



Hardiness: Hardy down to at least 10°F, and plants grown from seed collected in cold regions might be hardy to -30° F.



Sun tolerance: This plant thrives in full sun in both high and low deserts.



Watering and feeding: Very drought tolerant, but more water stimulates faster growth.



Soil requirements: As the name suggests, it is extremely tolerant of saline soils. Resistant to Texas root rot.



Pruning: Prune lightly as needed to shape, or occasionally severe to control size.