

Mini data sheet on *Baccharis spicata*

Added to the EPPO Alert List in 2017 - Deleted in 2019

Reasons for deletion:

Baccharis spicata was added to the EPPO Alert List in 2017 but as no immediate risk was perceived, it was transferred to the Observation List in 2019.

Why

Baccharis spicata (Asteraceae) is a medium sized shrub native to South America. In 2015 two naturalised populations were recorded for the first time in the vicinity of Porto (Matosinhos and Vila do Conde) in Portugal (EPPO RS 2017/070). Since these observations, four additional populations have been recorded with the most northern and southern populations some 30 km apart. *B. spicata* has a wide climatic tolerance and can colonise a variety of habitats. Coupled with high seed production which are wind-dispersed, *B. spicata* has the potential of becoming an emerging invasive species in the EPPO region.

Geographical distribution

EPPO Region: Portugal.

South America: Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay.

Morphology

B. spicata is a dioecious medium sized shrub usually 40-150 cm in height (maximum 300 cm). Stems are unwinged and branch from the base. The lower leaves are opposite with the upper leaves sub-opposite to alternate. The species is capable of reproducing after 12 months. Inflorescences are terminal and composed of cylindrical spikes. Flower heads are sessile and solitary or grouped in small glomerules. The achenes bear a pappus which aids wind-dispersal.

Biology and ecology

Both male and female plants are present in Portugal. Seed production and dispersal rates are similar to that of the congener *B. halimifolia* (EPPO A2 List - EU List of Union concern), indicating that *B. spicata* also has the potential for long distance dispersal.

Habitats

In its native range, *B. spicata* is reported to exhibit a high level of plasticity for suitable habitats. It can grow in steppe and grasslands, disturbed coastal areas, river margins, arable land, abandoned paddies and urban areas. In the EPPO region, in Portugal, the species is found on disturbed habitats colonised by other invasive non-native plant species.

Pathways for movement

Three *Baccharis* species are grown in European gardens - *B. magellanica*, *B. patagonica* and *B. halimifolia*. However, there is no evidence that *B. spicata* is or has been grown as an ornamental species in the region. The two originally identified populations in Portugal are located in the vicinity of an international airport and seaport, and thus accidental introduction is the most likely pathway of entry for these populations.

Impacts

In Portugal, *B. spicata* grows on disturbed ground with other highly invasive species such as *Acacia longifolia*, *A. melanoxylon*, *Cortaderia selloana* and *Paspalum dilatatum*. In these habitats, *B. spicata* shows strong competition with other species becoming an abundant species in the community.

Control

The populations in Portugal represent the first naturalised record of the species outside its native range and thus there is little information on control options for the species. An EPPO National Regulatory Control Standard is available for *B. halimifolia* (PM 9/23 (1) *Baccharis halimifolia*), and some management methodologies detailed may be suitable for *B. spicata*.

Sources

Domingues de Almeida J (2018) New additions to the exotic vascular flora of continental Portugal. *Flora Mediterranea* **28**, 259-278.

EPPO (2016) First report of *Baccharis spicata* in Portugal. EPPO Reporting Service 2017 no. 3. Available at: <https://gd.eppo.int/reporting/article-6038>.

Verloove F, Dana ED, Alves P (2017) *Baccharis spicata* (Asteraceae), a new potentially invasive species to Europe. *Plant Biosystems* <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/11263504.2017.1303001>