
Sweet Resinbush

Sweet resinbush (*Euryops subcarnosus*), a South African native, was introduced to Arizona in the 1930's in the hope that it would produce forage for livestock and protect soils from erosion. Instead, it has steadily expanded its range displacing native forage plants that wildlife and livestock depend upon.

Sweet resinbush is a medium-sized shrub to three feet tall. It has small leaves that are divided into three to five narrow lobes. Sweet resinbush has foliage in winter and spring, then sheds its leaves during the dry season. It is a member of the sunflower family and has yellow, daisy-like flowers during January and February.

The flowers produce an abundant seed crop by April or May. The seeds form in star-like clusters of about ten fruits. Most of the seeds drop to the ground around the parent plant but many seedlings can be found several yards away. These fruits are covered with fine "hairs" that allow them to cling to animal fur and clothing. This creates a great potential for seed transport and establishment of new populations.

Interestingly, sweet resinbush is not palatable to any domestic or wild grazing animals. This misconception came from a 1928 publication: *The Flowering Plants of South Africa*, Vol. III, by I.B. Pole Evans. In this publication, it misstated that the plant was palatable. This misinformation attracted the attention of USDA scientists looking for plants to improve the range and, as they say, the rest is history.

Recent research has shown that most species of *Euryops* contain noxious chemicals, which render them not only unpalatable, but also toxic to wildlife and livestock. All one needs to do is smell the foliage and flowers of sweet resinbush and a pungent, resinous aroma is apparent.

A concern with many noxious weed species is their ability to form a monoculture and exclude native plants. Sweet resinbush does appear to form a monoculture. It is not known whether this is due to the chemical compounds they contain (allelopathy) or a greater competitive advantage that allows it to better exploit resources (especially soil water). Sweet resinbush is on the AZ Department of Agriculture noxious weed list and a small population once existed southwest of Cottonwood, AZ.

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Adapted from original *Backyard Gardener* publications by Jeff Schalau, Agent, Agriculture & Natural Resources, University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, Yavapai County

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