



Cotoneaster

Cotoneaster spp.

Alberta Regulation:
Unregulated



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Overview:

Cotoneasters are perennial, woody shrubs which generally have a prostrate growth habit, and may be deciduous or evergreen.¹ Native to China, there are many species in cultivation as popular ornamental species. Cotoneaster is used mostly in rock gardens and can be trained to cover low walls.¹

Cotoneasters form dense layers of interwoven branches. Branches in contact with the ground can take root, expanding their deep and strong root system.³ They are hardy, temperate plants which reproduce mainly by seed.² Abundant white to pink flowers in spring produce red to orange berries by fall. Flower/berry colour varies among species. Birds consume some berries and may facilitate dispersal. Patches can expand by sprouting from shallow roots.² Their dense growth habit excludes all other vegetation.

Some cotoneaster species have become naturalized in California, Oregon, and Washington state.³ On the B.C. coast 2 species of cotoneaster have become established in natural areas.²

Habitat:

Cotoneasters favour areas with rocky soils. Some species have invaded calcareous grasslands, or high value habitats like sand dunes.¹ It is only slightly shade tolerant and prefers mesic sites with good drainage.¹

Identification:

Stems: Are highly branched, interwoven and may extend 2-7 m. Branches are generally round and become reddish-brown in colour as they mature. Branches arch from their base and then spread horizontally.²

Leaves: Are somewhat rounded with pointed tips and alternate along branchlets. The leaves vary from shiny green to gray-green with fine hairs on top. Some species leaves have hairy undersides.² Leaf lengths vary from 2-8 cm in length among species.³

Flowers: Can be white to pink and appear solitarily or in clusters, depending on the species.² Flowers are insect-pollinated and produce shiny, round red to orange berries by fall. The berries often persist through winter.³

Prevention:

Recognize cotoneaster species and remove it when found growing in natural areas. Garden specimens should not be planted close to natural areas.

Control:

Grazing: Not applicable. Invasive plants should never be considered as forage.

Mechanical: Younger plants are easier to remove when the soil is moist. Larger plants will require cutting the limbs and digging the roots by shovel or backhoe. Any remaining stumps or shallow roots can re-sprout.² Roots can penetrate into rock crevices so sites will need to be re-visited to remove any new growth.² Re-vegetate disturbed areas with desirable vegetation. All plant debris should be disposed of in landfill-bound garbage.

Chemical: Currently there are no herbicides registered for use on control of cotoneaster. Always check product labels to ensure the herbicide is registered for use on the

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target plant in Canada by the Pest Management Regulatory Agency. Consult your local Agricultural Fieldman or Certified Pesticide Dispenser for more information.

Biological: None researched to date.



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- 2 Cotoneaster species. 2005. Invasive Species in Garry Oak and Associated Ecosystems in British Columbia. www.goert.ca. Accessed: January 8, 2016.
- 3 Cotoneaster spp. Invasive Plants of California's Wildland. California Invasive Plant Council. www.cal-ipc.org. Accessed: January 8, 2016.