

Malephora crocea

Coppery ice plant



CONICET
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MARINE-COASTAL EXOTIC SPECIES GUIDE FOR ARGENTINA

DESCRIPTION

- Perennial herb with prostrate stems corky at the base and fleshy ends.
- Leaves blue-green to red, triangular in x-section, fleshy, with rounded angles and smooth waxy surface. Less than 6 cm long.
- Flowers less than 5 cm in diameter. Petals bright red to coppery orange on the upper surface and magenta on the underside.



Photo: Alejandro Bortolus



Photo: Alejandro Bortolus



Photo: Nicolás Battini



Up to 30 cm tall

HABITAT

Typically in well drained sandy and salty soils dominated by xerophytes.

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Malephora crocea – Coppery ice plant



Photo: Alejandro Bortolus

Carpobrotus spp.

SIMILAR SPECIES

- *Carpobrotus* spp.: Exotic. Flowers and leaves larger than *M. crocea*. Stems prostrate and fleshy, up to 2 m long. Leaves mostly green and reddish tips, sharp triangular x-section with serrated outer border. Flowers white to magenta or pink, 3 to 10 cm in diameter.

INVASIVE STATUS

Malephora crocea is native to desert highlands of southern Africa (more than 1000 m). The date of introduction in Argentina is uncertain, but it is currently naturalized in different sites along the Patagonian coast where it is appreciated for stabilizing sand dunes and as a resistant ornamental species too.

IMPACT ON NATIVE COMMUNITIES

Little is known about this species in Argentina. It usually covers smaller areas than *Carpobrotus*, but it can overgrow preexistent vegetation wherever is introduced or planted.

CONTACT US

This guide has been developed by the Grupo de Ecología en Ambientes Costeros (GEAC), from CENPAT (CONICET). If you find this species outside the reported areas, please contact us and let us know the date, locality, approximate number of individuals and, if possible, send us a picture:

 especiesexoticasarg@gmail.com



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