



Saltland  
Pastures  
Association (Inc.)  
for productive saltland

# S.P.A. Notes

## PLANTS

Sally Phelan, Project Manager and Michael Lloyd, Chairman, Saltland Pastures Association

## WAVY LEAF SALTBUSSH

### Scientific name

*Atriplex undulata*

### Origin

Argentina

### Description

A low shrub, growing to one metre high and two metres across. The leaves are small and wavy, and greyish green in colour.

### Rainfall zone

250-500mm

### Salinity/Waterlogging tolerance

Moderate tolerance to salinity. Does not tolerate long periods of waterlogging, especially in summer. Less waterlogging tolerant than other saltbush species.



Wavy leaf saltbush  
(photo courtesy Saltland Pastures in Australia)

### Site selection and establishment

Wavy leaf saltbush comes from the semi-arid rangeland of Argentina. It is the easiest saltbush to establish from seed (using a niche seeder) on sandy surfaced duplex soils. Direct seeding is best done in spring (August onwards), when soil temperatures are warmer and there

is still a reasonable chance of follow up rain. Saltbush should be planted in narrow rows on moderately saline sites, or wider rows on fresher sites, where grasses and clovers may grow underneath. Wavy-leaf does not produce large quantities of feed and so is usually mixed with other saltbush species.

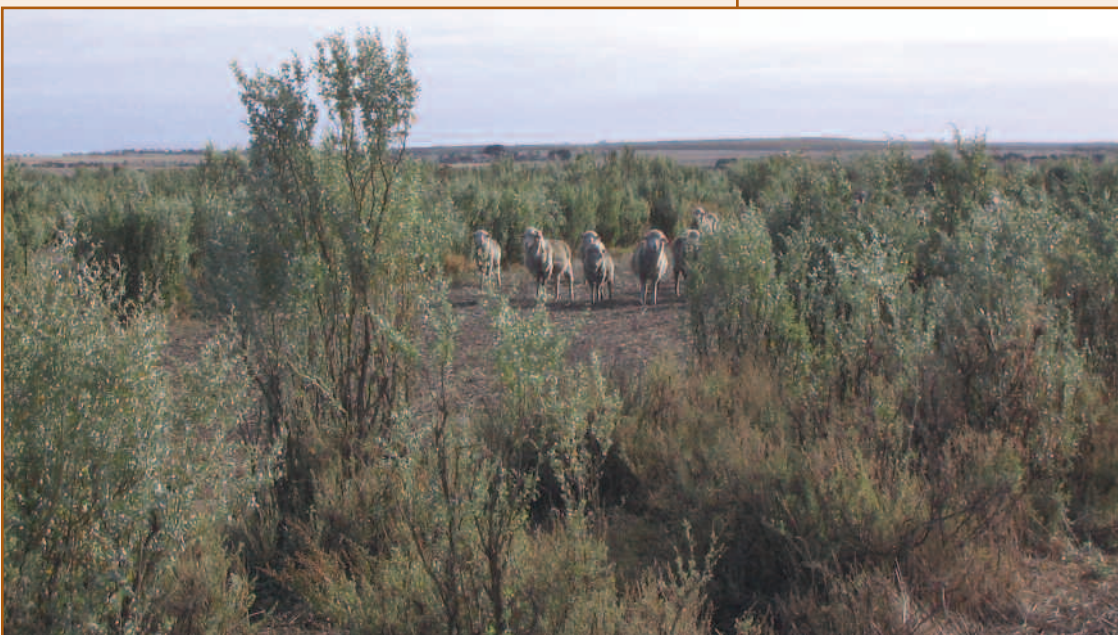
### Compatible species

If direct seeding, mix with old man saltbush.

Generally not grown from seedlings, but can be mixed with old man and river saltbush.

### Grazing saltbush-based pastures

Most farmers find grazing saltbush most valuable during the autumn feed gap, however grazing saltbush is not as simple as putting the sheep in and closing the gate. Saltbush is high in crude protein, but is



Sheep grazing old man saltbush (taller)  
and wavy leaf saltbush (shorter)



also high in salt and low in metabolisable energy. This means that sheep grazing saltbush will need a low-salt, high energy understorey or supplement (such as hay) to achieve weight maintenance. They will also need a plentiful supply of good quality water to help flush the salts from their system.

Saltbush based pastures can usually achieve stocking rates of 4-7 sheep per hectare. On sites with good understorey growth, the higher stocking rates can be achieved if rotational grazing is used. This improves animal performance by forcing the animals to eat a more equal mix of high protein saltbush and high energy understorey. If rotational grazing is not feasible or if understorey growth is limited, lower stocking rates should be used.

Wavy leaf saltbush does not withstand heavy grazing.

### **Cost:**

Seedlings – 30-40 cents each.

Seed - \$50 – 60/kg.

Seedlings are available from most commercial tree nurseries.

Seed is available from commercial seed suppliers.

### **For more information:**

Visit the Saltland Pastures Association website on [www.crcsalinity.com.au/spa](http://www.crcsalinity.com.au/spa)

Barrett-Lennard, Ed. (2003). Saltland Pastures in Australia – A Practical Guide. Land, Water and Wool, Canberra.



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Agriculture,**  
**Fisheries and Forestry**  
**National Landcare Program**

