

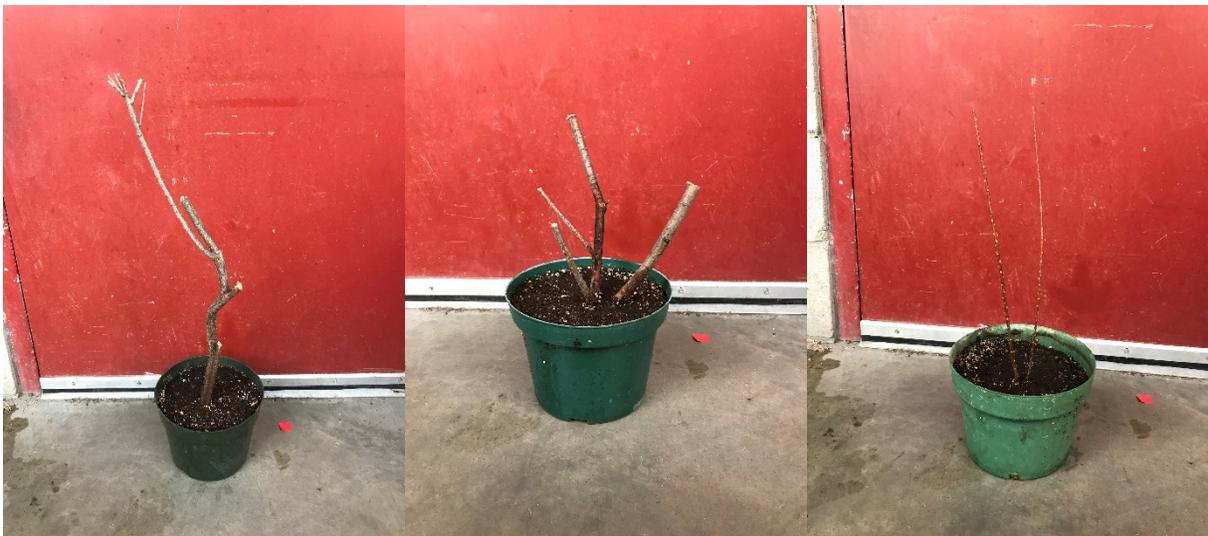
Saltcedar Collection Protocol

Selecting the right plants:

RULE #1: If the plant is too big to dig up, it is too big for me to use



Plants in the back of the above photo by the red arrow would typically be too big, plants by the blue arrow are perfect size for collecting. Adam (field assistant in photo) is about 6' tall for a size reference



Plants that have a single stem or multiple stems are equally useful for rearing *Diorhabda*. Even the 1 year old seedlings about the width of a pencil are useful (above photo, far right).

Select plants that have stem diameters between $\frac{1}{2}$ "- $1\frac{1}{2}$ " in diameter, but plants up to 3" in diameter can also be used.

Collecting the plants can be very efficient once a good location is found. 1-4 year old saltcedar patches on mudflats and sand bars make for the easiest collecting as the mud and sand is easy to dig through. Once a good stand of saltcedar is found, it is easy to collect 50-100 plants an hour.

Tools:

- Shovel
- Pulaski axe (my preferred way of digging up saltcedar)
- Hand held pruners and two hand pruning shears for larger plants
- Five gallon buckets or coolers (hard sided container work better than plastic bags)

Digging up plants:

When digging up the plants, it will be impossible to collect much of the root system, due to the massive tap root saltcedar has. However, saltcedar readily re-sprouts roots from the crown. When digging try to get between 2"-8" of the crown/root below the ground.

Trimming plants:

Once the plant has been dug up, prune the above ground growth to 12-24" from the crown, being sure to remove all green foliage if the plant is actively growing and not dormant. This pruning is vital as the re-sprouting root system will not initially be able to support much foliage. The canopy has to be heavily pruned so the roots can support the regrowth.

Care for uprooted plants:

Even though saltcedar is drought tolerant, all collected plants should be kept in water once they are dug up. Since saltcedar almost always grows along waterways, it is easy to get water from the nearest source (I rarely bring water with me when I collect plants). If plants cannot be delivered within the day of being dug up, they can be stored for 10-14 days submerged in water (below left photo). It is best to store the plants underwater outside, as the plants make a very pungent smell.

Once the plants have been delivered, they will get potted and start to be used to feed *Diorhabda* (below photo: center and right). Typically 70% of the plants survive the transplanting process, but it is also not uncommon to get only 50% survival.

