

# Hottentot fig

*Carpobrotus edulis*

**Invasive: High impact**

## Species profile

- Habitat:** Terrestrial. Found mostly on coastal cliffs.
- Distribution in Ireland:** Localised around the east and south coast of the country.
- Status:** Established.
- Family name:** Aizoaceae.
- Reproduction:** Vegetative propagation by runners (rooting at nodes) also capable of reproducing from seed which ripens from July and September.

## Identifying features

- Colour:** May first notice a dense mat of succulent green leaves with trailing dead leaves and stems.
- Leaves:** Very succulent, in opposite pairs. Leaves are triangular in cross section. Some older leaves may appear reddish.
- Flower:** Yellow or magenta solitary flower with a yellow centre. Only opens in sunlight generally in the afternoon.



Flower of the hottentot fig  
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Leaves arranged in opposite pairs  
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Colony of hottentot fig showing its mat forming abilities  
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## Threats

Competes aggressively for space with native plant species. Can smother the EU protected habitat type Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts (1230).

Hybrid species can lead to intensified invasions.

Can hinder the disturbance regime in dune habitats which are protected under the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.

## Similar species

May be confused with native sea-spurry (*Spergularia*) species or with native sea-blite (*Suaeda*) species.



Triangular stem shape of hottentot fig  
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The hottentot fig can be confused with *Spergularia* species, due to their fleshy leaves and habitat, however the flowering heads of both plants are markedly different  
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Succulent, fleshy leaves colour ranging from green to red  
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