

# Characteristics of plant communities invaded by *Dittrichia graveolens* (Stinkwort), as it spreads away from roads

**ANDREW LOPEZ**

*Parker Lab. Mentors: Miranda Melen & Nicky Loustenhouwer*

*Dittrichia graveolens* is an annual plant in the Asteraceae family native to the Mediterranean Basin. *Dittrichia* is a relatively new invader to California and is found primarily along roadsides and in disturbed soils. Since *Dittrichia*'s arrival in California in the mid-1980s, it has spread across the state and is now in about three-quarters of California counties (40+ counties). Recently, the species has been observed spreading away from roadsides into vegetated areas. Which plant communities are vulnerable to *Dittrichia* invasion? It is important we understand this to know where to target resources for management and prevention. Thirty populations of *Dittrichia* were surveyed in Santa Clara County to assess the vegetation it associates with. Samples were selected from off-road sites invaded by *Dittrichia*, and each off-road site was paired to the nearest roadside site, the most likely source of *Dittrichia* invasion. Using quadrats, data was collected on percent cover of *Dittrichia*, other vegetation, and bare ground, and plant species found within the population of *Dittrichia* were identified. I will present information about the structure and communities within both site types (road and off-road), providing preliminary insights into the community ecology and species interactions of this invader.



*Andrew is a Plant Science major with a Chemistry minor. Andrew is from San Jose, California.*