"In March, 1917, Prof. J. J. Thornber, a collaborator of the Office of Crop Physiology and Breeding Investigations, sent to Mr. Bruce Drummond, superintendent of the date gardens at Indio and Mecca, Calif., a few unrooted cuttings about 1 foot long and one-fourth to one-half inch in diameter, of *Tamarix articulata*, received in March, 1909, by Prof. Thornber from Dr. L. Trabut, Government botanist of Algiers. These cuttings made phenomenal growth and by the fall of 1918 were attracting attention all over the Coachella Valley, the original cuttings then being, some of them, more than 20 feet high. This species, called athel by the Arabs, is an excellent windbreak provided the lower branches are not cut off. It grows so rapidly that it makes effective windbreaks inside of two years. After a growth of five years the original trees are several of them well over 50 feet high, having a maximum diameter at the ground of 14 to 17 inches. Without question this is one of the most important windbreaks ever found for use in the great irrigated valleys of the Southwest.

"This species, unlike many other species of Tamarix, is gray-green in color, evergreen, and pyramidal in shape, making a very handsome ornamental tree, especially when young.

"The athel not only grows very rapidly, but has hard wood which when dry makes excellent fuel. Prof. S. C. Mason reports that in Egypt this wood is prized by the Arabs for construction purposes, as it is not attacked by borers such as so greatly damage acacia and other hardwoods in Egypt. Dr. Trabut informed me in 1899 that it was the largest and most important tree of the Sahara Desert, frequently attaining a circumference of 6 feet and rarely as much as 17 feet.

"To Mr. Bruce Drummond belongs the credit for having discovered the great value of this species for windbreaks and for ornamental plantings in the hot, irrigated valleys of the Southwest. The original plantings of this species at Tucson, Ariz., made much slower growth and had not made obvious the extraordinary value of this species as a windbreak in the date-growing regions of the Southwest. Because of Mr. Drummond's prompt recognition of the value of this species and active dissemination of cuttings, it is estimated that 25,000 trees are now growing in the Coachella Valley alone, all propagated from less than a dozen original cuttings sent to Mr. Drummond by Prof. Thornber in 1917.

"In March, 1899, when I had the good fortune to make the acquaintance of Dr. L. Trabut, the eminent physician, botanist, and agriculturist of Algeria, he called my attention to this important tree and gave me cuttings from the trees growing in the botanical garden at the University of Algiers, together with information which was published in Inventory No. 7, under No. 3343. Unfortunately, the steamship *Strathleven* on which I shipped this material on March 6, 1899, did not proceed directly from Algiers to New York, as the captain expected, but was ordered back to Smyrna and spent nearly three months in making the trip from Algeria to New York. As a result, many of the plants, among them *Tamarix articulata*, died on the way to this country.

"The spectacular character of this extraordinary plant and its rapid utilization in a practical way is a proof of the value of thorough botanical studies such as Prof. Thornber has been making on Tamarix for some years past. Doubtless most of the species are of little practical value, but among numerous untested species which Prof. Thornber obtained was the athel, which promises to be worth millions to the farmers of the southwestern United States." (*Walter T. Swingle.*)

For an illustration showing the use of the athel tree as a windbreak, see **Plate IV.**