

Scotch Broom

Cytisus scoparius Pea Family

Identification Tips

- Evergreen shrub (stems are evergreen; leaves often fall off in summer)
- Reaches 6-10 feet tall
- Branches erect and angled, with prominent ridges
- Flowers bright yellow, pea-like, along entire stem
- Leaves small, short-lived, can be simple or 3-parted
- Seed pods black, hard, and hairy on edges

Biology

Flowers March-June. Reproduces mainly by seed; when mature, seedpods split open and eject seeds up to 20 feet away. One plant can produce more than 10,000 seeds, which can remain viable in soil up to 60 years or more.

Impacts

Not palatable to horses, livestock, elk, and deer. Displaces native and beneficial plants. Nothing grows under Scotch broom due to allelopathy. Damages butterfly and other wildlife habitat. Slows down reforestation. Renders rangelands and grasslands worthless. Dense stands impede the movement of wildlife. Considered a potential fire hazard. Nitrogen fixing can increase invasion of other weeds into Puget Sound prairies, that are naturally nutrient poor.

Distribution

Found throughout King County, including in pastures, vacant lands, harvested timberlands, and along roadsides and rights-of-way. Thrives in full sun, but will also establish in shady areas. Native to South and Central Europe.

What You Can Do

There is no legal requirement to control Scotch broom in most of King County, but removal is recommended as part of forestry, pasture, and natural area management. You can help prevent Scotch broom from spreading by washing vehicles, boots, and animals that may have been in infested areas, and removing the weed from your property whenever possible.

Control Methods

For best results, control methods should be adaptive and employed throughout several growing seasons. Reduce impact to pollinators

**Control of Scotch broom is required on the right-of-way of King County's section of SR-2, and on the I-90 right-of-way between mile marker 34 and the King/Kittitas county line.*

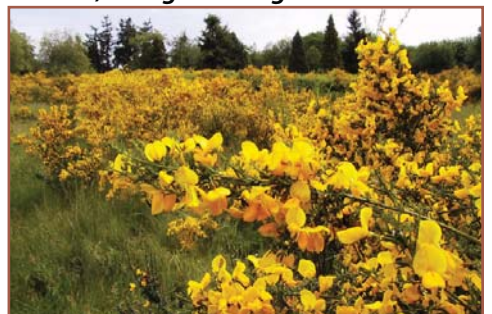
**Non-Regulated Class B
Noxious Weed: Control
Generally Not Required***



Scotch broom (a.k.a. Scot's broom) was brought to the U.S. from Europe as an ornamental and for erosion control.



Scotch broom has small, simple or 3-parted leaves, pea-like yellow flowers, and green ridged stems.



In the Pacific Northwest, Scotch broom spreads rapidly, growing so dense that it is often impenetrable.

Questions?

King County Noxious Weed Control Program: **206-477-WEED** kingcounty.gov/weeds

by controlling plants before or after blooming. Plant trees or other competitive vegetation to reduce reintroduction from seed bank.

Manual:

Plants under three feet can usually be hand-pulled. Easiest when soil is moist. Roots are deep but do not extend horizontally. Larger plants can be removed with a specially designed steel weed puller; these tools are available to borrow from the King County Noxious Weed Control Program office (call for more information). Soil disturbance from pulling can result in broom seed germination so check area in the following years to remove new plants.

Mechanical:

Cutting Scotch broom when it is mature (when stems are brown) will kill most plants, especially during the dry season. Young, green plants cannot be killed by mowing and will regrow. When cutting broom, take care to avoid spreading mature seedpods to uninfested areas. Key to success is keeping seeds from forming after initial clearing and removing any seedlings before they mature. Plants can be chipped, left to compost, or burned but be careful because plants are highly flammable.

Chemical:

Follow all applicable laws and regulations regarding herbicide use on your site, and follow all label directions. Foliar herbicide application is most effective after full leaf development and before leaves fall off in summer. Basal or cut stump treatment methods are effective any time. Grass helps suppress Scotch broom seedlings so use a selective broadleaf herbicide if possible. Selective broadleaf herbicides with active ingredients triclopyr, aminopyralid, or metsulfuron work well for grassy areas. Triclopyr is generally considered to be the most effective product for Scotch broom, although it works better on second-year plants than seedlings. Products containing glyphosate are also effective. However, glyphosate is "non-selective" and will kill grass so reseeding or planting will be necessary. Chemical control options may differ for private, commercial, and government agency users. For more information, contact the Noxious Weed Control Program.



Specially designed weed pullers work well for Scotch broom control.

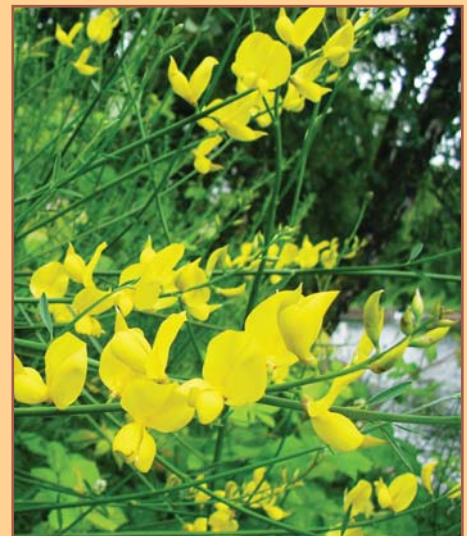
Could be confused with:

Spanish broom (*Spartium junceum*) is uncommon in King County and is a Class A noxious weed.

While it looks similar to the more common Scotch broom, Spanish broom can be identified by its smooth, round stems and larger, fragrant flowers. This plant is also non-native and highly invasive in the same types of habitat as Scotch broom. It is found in both urban and rural areas where it has escaped ornamental plantings.



Spanish broom has smooth, round, primarily leafless stems.



Flowers are fragrant and larger.