

SCOTCH BROOM

Cytisus scoparius

Fabaceae, the pea family

Category: Control

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FACTSHEET INFORMATION

Summary of Invasiveness

- Scotch broom is an aggressive invader with the ability to form dense, impenetrable thickets that degrade native ecosystems.
- Infestations can alter fire, nutrient, and water cycling regimes, negatively impacting ecosystem functions and decreasing biodiversity.

Description

- Woody, perennial shrub that can grow up to 10 feet tall and live at least 25 years.
- Abundant showy, bright yellow flowers will occasionally have red marking in the centers.
- Leaves are composed of 3 leaflets that are dark green above, and paler and fuzzy below.
- Flat seed pods are 1-1.5 inches long with fuzzy edges, brownish-black when ripe and contain bean-like seeds that eject short distances.
- Slender, erect, green branches are grooved, 5-angled and photosynthetic.

Introduction and Movement

- Scotch broom is native to Europe and was first introduced to the U.S. in the early 1800s as an ornamental shrub and as ballast in ships.
- Inhabits disturbed sites such as pastures, forest borders, and roadsides, and prefers well drained soils.
- Each shrub can produce up to 10,000 seeds allowing for easy dispersal by wind, water, and human/animal vectors.

Prevention Strategy

- To prevent accidental introductions, learn how to identify Scotch broom and eradicate infestations on your property.
- When gardening, always research plants before planting and only purchase seeds from licensed nurseries.
- Always remove and properly dispose of all seed and plant materials on vehicles, clothing, shoes and pets before you exit or enter outdoor recreational sites.
- Always Remember To: **KNOW WHAT YOU GROW & KNOCK IT OFF!**

Sources

- CABI Invasive Species Compendium: <https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/17610>
- Idaho's Noxious Weeds 9th Edition, University of Idaho: <http://www.extension.uidaho.edu/publishing/pdf/BUL/BUL816.pdf>.



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