

SCOTCH BROOM

BOTANICAL NAME: (*Cytisus scoparius*)

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?: Scotch broom is a woody plant with mostly erect branches that can grow to 10 feet tall. The branches are dark green and five sided. The leaves are small -about ½ inches long. New leaves, produced in the spring, often fall off during dry summer months. The plant may be leafless for most of the year. The flowers resemble those of a pea plant and are bright yellow. Scotch broom can form dense brush fields and this diminishes habitat for grazing animals.



WHERE DOES IT LIKE TO GROW? This plant likes to grow in well drained sites. It spreads rapidly along roads, where the seed becomes imbedded in the tires of passing vehicles. It can be found in pastures, cultivated fields, forests and home landscapes.

WHEN DOES IT BLOOM? Bright yellow flowers begin to appear in our area in May and June, followed by the formation of pea-shaped pods containing several seeds.

HOW DOES IT SPREAD? When pods mature they are brown and smooth (except for hair along the margins), flattened, and contain beanlike seeds. The seeds are thrown some distance as the pods snap open at maturity. The seeds have hard coats enabling some of them to survive in the environment for 60 to 80 years. A mature broom plant has typically produce so much seed bank that any disturbance of the ground around it results in a new germination.



HOW DO I CONTROL IT? See the reverse side for information on mechanical, cultural, biological and chemical control options for Scotch Broom. Also see our Chemical Treatment handout for more information on using herbicides.

For more information please contact: **Kootenai County Noxious Weed Control**
10905 N. Ramsey Road
Hayden, ID 83835
208-446-1290

kcnoxioussweeds@kcgov.us or www.kcweeds.com

Kootenai County does not discriminate against individuals or groups on the basis of disability in the admission or access to, or treatment in, its public meetings, programs, or activities. Requests for assistance or accommodations can be arranged by contacting the Noxious Weed Control Department at (208) 446-1290 or County Administration Office TTY (208)446-2145 with 3 days advance notice.

How to Control Scotch Broom

Scotch Broom reproduces by seed only. Control is accomplished by removing existing plants and preventing existing seeds from germinating.

Mechanical Mechanical methods can be very effective on Scotch Broom as long as care is taken to not disturb soil, allowing new germinations. Pull plants with a tool such as an uprooter/weed wrench or similar, or cut just below the soil surface while the plant is blooming. The timing is important, if it's not in bloom the roots can have enough stored energy to regrow, but when in bloom it usually cannot recover from being cut and removed just below soil level. Do not disturb the soil!

Cultural The best long term weed control is to get your desirable native plants thriving. This is especially important with Scotch Broom because of the sheer number of seeds produced and the extremely long time they remain viable. If Scotch Broom is established on your land, you will *always* have the seed bank. Don't let it grow by keeping a healthy, well managed grass cover.

Biological There is a seed beetle, seed weevil, and twig miner moth that have been used as biocontrol agents for Scotch Broom. For more information contact Nez Perce Biocontrol Center at www.nezpercebiocontrol.com or (208)843-9374.

Chemical * See our *Chemical Treatment* handout for more information on using herbicides.

- **Triclopyr** is the active ingredient in herbicide products such as **Garlon 3a**, **Element 3a**, and many "Poison Ivy and Tough Brush Killer" type products. It is broadleaf selective (safe on grass) and is one of the more effective choices for Scotch Broom and also works well when mixed with 2,4-D as in products like **Crossbow**, or with Aminopyralid as in products like **Capstone**. Foliar treatments should be made while the plant is rapidly growing, or you can apply it to cut bark or cut stump applications when the ground is not frozen.
- **Imazapyr** is the active ingredient in herbicide products such as **Habitat**. It can work well on Scotch Broom but is non-selective and will also kill grass.

Chemical recommendations are based on University of Idaho Extension Bulletin 865 Idaho's Noxious Weeds 2011 Control Guidelines Noncrop and Rangeland Sites, the book Weed Control in Natural Areas in the Western United States published by UC Davis Weed Research & Information Center, and herbicide labels.