

Scotch Broom Fact Sheet

Cytisus Scoparius

Fabaceae Family



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Distinguishing Features:

- ❶ **Flowers:** The flowers are bright yellow, resemble sweet pea flowers, and occur singly or in pairs in the upper leaf axils.
- ❷ **Seeds:** Seed pods are fuzzy on the edges and will explode when mature, forcefully expelling the seeds. The seeds are small and range from green to brown to reddish brown.
- ❸ **Leaves:** Leaves are small, alternate and compound with 3 leaflets. The leaves are often not noticeable, due to the dark green stems.
- ❹ **Flowering Time:** Flowers bloom from March through June.
- ❺ **Life cycle:** Yellow flowers open in late spring to early summer. During the end of summer, brown seeds pods burst open and seeds are shot out into the soil.

Impacts:

- Scotch Broom is an extremely aggressive shrub and can easily displace native vegetation, creating thick monocultures that reduce animal habitat.
- Scotch Broom burns readily and can increase the frequency and impact of forest fires in infested areas.
- The leaves and seeds of Scotch broom contain toxic alkaloids and are unpalatable to grazing animals. An infestation will quickly diminish an area's grazing capacity.



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Control:

- Hand pulling or cutting, taking care to remove the root system, can be effective in controlling small infestations. It must be repeated annually to control resprouts and seedlings. Burning can also be an effective control method if repeated two and four years after the initial fire.
- There are currently three biocontrol agents approved for use in the US, including the Scotch broom seed beetle, the Scotch broom seed weevil, and the Scotch broom twig miner moth.
- Broad leaf herbicides such as Glyphosate have been effectively used to control Scotch Broom, although the method of application varies by infestation age and site. Treatment must be repeated annually to kill seedlings.

*Please visit our website for references sourcing this information.



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