

Broom

Cytisus scoparius

What does it look like?

Broom is an upright, many-branched, almost leafless woody shrub, reaching up to 3m tall. It is a perennial plant, with a stout taproot. Leaves are sparse, mostly narrow and simple. It has golden-yellow flowers in spring that are 2.5cm long, and produces seed pods in summer which are black when ripe and explode loudly on warm days, scattering the seed.

Broom grows in river beds, hedgerows, low-fertility hill country, scrubland, coastal and disturbed land. It is tolerant of a wide range of conditions including drought and frost, but requires good drainage.

Why is it a problem?

Broom is an aggressive invasive shrub that seeds prolifically, with each pod producing nine seeds and usually more than 2000 pods/bush. These seeds can still be viable after five years.

This means that not only will broom displace native species which would normally grow there, it also makes control difficult as it needs to be managed regularly (seedlings pulled out) while trying to establish native bush.



Control Methods

Physical control

Firstly establish plant is not native broom. Control only where broom is a recent threat, of low incidence or poses a high ecological threat. Resprouts after slashing. Pull or dig small plants (all year round). Ensure minimum soil disturbance. Leave on site to rot down.

Herbicide control

Stump swab (all year round): triclopyr 600 EC (50ml/L) or triclopyr 120g/L (250ml/L) or metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (5g/L). Or,

Spray (spring-summer): metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (7.5g/15L + penetrant (knapsack) or 35g/100L + penetrant (spraygun)) or a product containing 100g picloram+300g triclopyr/L (90ml/15L (knapsack) or 200-300ml/100L + penetrant (spraygun)).

CAUTION: When using any herbicide or pesticide, PLEASE READ THE LABEL THOROUGHLY to ensure that all instructions and safety requirements are followed.

Biological control

Broom gall mite, broom leaf beetle, broom psyllid, broom seed beetle and broom shoot moth have all been released in the Wellington region, between 1994 and 2009. The psyllid and seed beetle are now widespread and the gall mite has established. Contact GW for more information.

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Related Links

New Zealand Plant Conservation Network http://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora_details.aspx?ID=3839

NZ Flora <http://www.nzflora.info/factsheet/Taxon/Cytisus-scoparius.html>

Biocontrol <https://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/discover-our-research/biosecurity/weed-management/using-biocontrol/>

Weedbusters <https://www.weedbusters.org.nz/what-are-weeds/weed-list/broom/>