



Yachats Weed of the Month - April

Scotch Broom (*Cytisus scoparius*)

Scotch Broom is coming into flower even as I write this in mid-March. We have had some success in controlling this weed in Yachats – driving through our city on Hwy 101 you will be hard-pressed to identify a single broom plant. But we still have some problem areas, such as Horizon Hill. And new plants keep germinating from old seed. You can help by pulling this weed now, while the soil is still moist and before the seeds set.

Identification: The shrubs grow up to 10 ft (3 m) tall, with small green leaves. Flowers are usually bright yellow but may have varying amounts of red or brown tones. Stands of broom are unmistakable when in flower. The mature seed pods are dark brown and shaped like pea pods. Broom plants produce large quantities of seed which can remain viable for up to 80 years. French broom, Spanish broom and Portuguese broom are broadly similar in appearance, having small leaves and bright yellow flowers, and all of them are undesirable.

Impact: Scotch broom is a problem throughout Oregon. It invades various habitats, especially disturbed areas such as cleared plots and roadsides. Brooms displace native plants and inhibit reforestation. The seeds and flowers are toxic to humans and livestock. In summer, broom becomes a severe fire hazard.

Management: Cut plants will regrow. Once plants get more than 2 ft tall, manual removal is difficult due to the strong root systems. Plants up to about 6 ft (2 m) tall can be pulled with a weed wrench, preferably in the spring. Weed wrenches come in three sizes and can be loaned from the City Hall front office – for most broom plants the medium size wrench works best.

Contact information: Call Wally at 541 547 5474 if you have any weed questions. For our web page, go to www.yachats.info

