

## **SCOTCH BROOM FACTS - By Dan Lubin, Redbud- CNPS, Grass Valley, CA**

- SCOTCH BROOM is a Non-native plant and is not part of the natural ecosystem in California.
  - It has no known natural predators or diseases in the U.S.
  - Crowds out native vegetation
  - Is highly FLAMMABLE even when green
  - Pollen is common allergen in springtime
- SCOTCH BROOM was brought into the United States with many uses:
  - SCOTCH BROOM is native to southern Europe and northern Africa. It was introduced into California in the 1850's as an ornamental plant.
  - It may also have been “packaging” in crates of goods, namely Whiskey! Scotch Broom may have been the “bubble-wrap” of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
  - Later it was used to prevent soil erosion and to stabilize coastal dunes by the Soil Conservation Service of the USDA.
- SPANISH BROOM, FRENCH BROOM, and GORSE are related plants also in California and in Nevada County.
  - All species are invasive plants and are highly flammable.
  - Seeds of all species are extremely “hard” and last up to 80 years or more.
  - Prone to reseed itself after fires and/or soil disturbances.
  - Contains no wildlife value – nothing eats it besides deer browsing on seedlings. Birds do not eat the seeds.

## **CONTROL and REMOVAL METHODS**

- Pulling or “Wrenching” SCOTCH BROOM is preferred method during the rainy season (November – May) when soil is wet and roots easily come out of soil.
  - A “Weed Wrench” or “Root Jack” is preferred tool to pull out Broom easily. These tools have a “claw” that surrounds the stem of the plant, and uses natural leverage to pull the plants directly out of the ground.
  - CUTTING does NOT work on SPANISH BROOM as roots are too extensive. Must cut during DRY season or herbicide treatment.
- Cutting all BROOMS during the DRY SEASON ONLY also works effectively, but only during the extreme dry months of July-October.
  - Cut the plants as close to the ground level as possible when soil moisture is at its lowest will cause the roots to immediately die off. Very effective in Sierra Nevada Foothills. (Less effective in Coastal areas where soil moisture is higher during summer months.)
  - Cutting also has the advantage of NOT DISTURBING the soil, thereby not encouraging new weeds.
- Either pile BROOMS to burn, or CUT the plants into small pieces to use as MULCH directly on the soil. Some experts say the BROOM “Mulch” will prevent new Broom seedlings.
  - One advantage to cutting and mulching Broom onsite is not transporting seeds to new areas.