

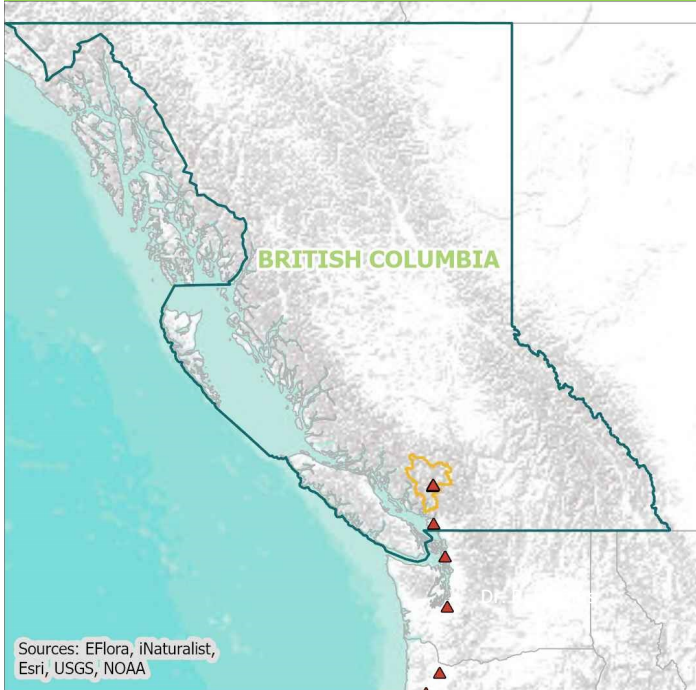
# White Spanish Broom

*Cytisus multiflorus* (AKA White Broom, Portugese Broom)

FACT SHEET

Squamish: Prevent | Whistler: Eradicate | Pemberton: Prevent

## DISTRIBUTION



**Origin:** As its name indicates, White Spanish Broom is native to Europe, specifically France, Spain and Portugal.

**Habitat:** Little is known about the habitat requirements of White Spanish Broom. It appears to spread to disturbed and undisturbed areas, from roadside sites to grasslands and open woodlands in temperate regions.

**Reproduction:** White Spanish Broom reproduces by seed. Similar to Scotch Broom, the White Spanish Broom seeds are believed to remain viable in the soil for several decades, causing the rapid formation of a long-lived seedbank.

White Spanish Broom infestations can also spread through stem pieces taking root.

## IDENTIFICATION



**Flowers:** Small, pea-like, white flowers with a pink streak at the base. White Spanish Broom flower are about 1 cm long and have 5 petals.

**Stems:** Young stems and leaves are covered in short hairs, which fall off as the plant ages. Stems are five-angled, flexible and striped, forming “broom-like” formations. Shrubs can be up to 3 m tall.

**Leaves:** The leaves are arranged in groups of three leaflets on lower branches and a single leaflet on higher branches. Each leaflet is small, under 1 cm long. Leaflets are generally oblong.

**Fruits:** Resemble pea pods. The seed pods are covered with short hairs and are generally 15 - 27 mm long and 4 - 7 mm wide. The pods turn black when mature and release seeds explosively when ripe. Each pod contains 3 - 7 seeds, which are 2.5 - 3.0 mm long and olive to brown in colour.

### Similar Species:

- **Invasive:** Scotch Broom (*Cytisus scoparius*), Spanish Broom (*Spartium junceum*), Lydia Broom (*Genista lydia*)

White Spanish Broom has finer, greyer foliage than Scotch Broom. When it's flowering, it is also easily distinguished from Scotch Broom and Spanish Broom by its white flowers.

**Vectors of Spread:** Most White Spanish Broom seeds fall near the parent plant. However, longer-distance dispersal can happen by movement of seed by water, or in mud attached to vehicles, machinery, footwear or animals. Seeds and stem pieces may also be dispersed in dumped garden waste.

#### WHAT CAN I DO?

**White Spanish Broom is found in communities the Sea to Sky Region, so PREVENTION of further spread is key:**

- Regularly monitor properties for weed infestations.
- Ensure soil and gravel are uncontaminated before transport.
- Don't unload, park, or store equipment or vehicles in infested areas; remove plant material from any equipment, vehicles, or clothing used in such areas and wash equipment and vehicles at designated cleaning sites before leaving infested areas.
- Minimize soil disturbances (e.g. use grazing plans that prevent soil exposure from overgrazing), and use seed mixes with dense, early colonization (e.g. alfalfa or barley) to re-vegetate exposed soil and resist invasion.
- Ensure plants (particularly flowering heads or root fragments) are bagged or covered to prevent spread during transport to designated disposal sites (e.g. landfill). **Do NOT compost.**

**White Spanish Broom can be controlled by:**

- **Mechanical Control:** Small seedlings (less than half a pencil width) can be pulled when soil is moist. Larger plants must be cut down at the base of the stem before they begin to flower. Due to White Spanish Broom's need of sunlight to photosynthesize, covering the newly cut stem with soil, moss or plastic will help prevent regrowth.
- **Chemical Control:** Commonly-used herbicides include triclopyr, imazapyr, aminopyralid, and glyphosate, applied alone or in combination with 2,4-D. Herbicides can be applied from spring to late summer using selective spot spraying, basal stem injection, or cut surface application. We recommend that any herbicide application is carried out by a person holding a valid BC Pesticide Applicator Certificate. Before selecting and applying herbicides, you must review and follow herbicide labels and application rates; municipal, regional, provincial and federal laws and regulations; species-specific treatment recommendations, and site-specific goals and objectives.
- **Biological Control:** Grazing with goats or sheep is suitable for pasture, especially on new growth.

**If you suspect you have found White Spanish Broom anywhere in the Sea to Sky region:**

**Contact** the Sea to Sky Invasive Species Council to report and for the most recent, up to date control methods. All reports will be kept confidential.

**References:** CABI, California Invasive Plant Council, Dave's Garden, Global Biodiversity Information Facility, Government of Australia, The Plant List, UC Berkeley Jepson eFlora, US Department of Agriculture, Queensland Government, RHS.

## IMPACTS

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#### Ecological:

- Dense thickets create fire hazards.
- Impedes the movement of wildlife
- Outcompetes and displaces native species, reducing biodiversity
- Outshades conifer seedlings.
- Can fix nitrogen in the soil, which increases soil fertility and gives a competitive advantage to other non-native weeds that thrive on high nitrogen levels.

#### Economic:

- Obstructs sightlines on roads, railways and utility right-of-ways, resulting in increased maintenance costs for removal.
- Reduces forage for livestock, resulting in reduced production.



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## REPORT SIGHTINGS

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