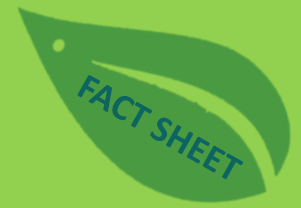


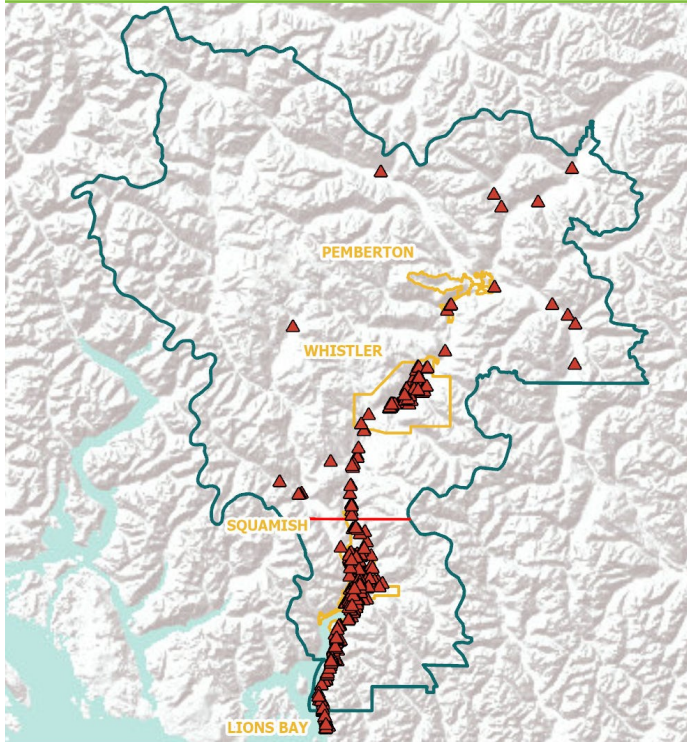
# Scotch Broom

*Cytisus scoparius*



Squamish: Strategic Control | Whistler: Eradicate | Pemberton: Eradicate

## DISTRIBUTION



**Origin:** Scotch Broom was brought to North America from Scotland in the 1850's as a garden ornamental. It was first introduced in Sooke, on Vancouver Island, by Captain Walter Grant.

**Habitat:** Grows in open, disturbed sites at low elevations. Scotch Broom is found along roads, railway lines, dry fields, rocky slopes, and utility right-of-ways. It thrives in areas with well-drained, sandy soil.

Scotch Broom is an extremely aggressive spreader and can quickly cover fields, meadows and any deforested areas.

It thrives in sunlight but can also grow in shady areas.

**Reproduction:** Spreads by seed and lateral bud growth. Mature plants can produce up to 3,500 seedpods, which contain between 5-12 seeds each. Each seed can remain viable in the soil for 60 years.

## IDENTIFICATION



J. Leekie

**Flowers:** Small, bright, pea-like, yellow flowers; they can also have a red centre. Scotch Broom flowers are about 2 cm long and have 5 petals. They occur in groups of 2 - 3 along the stems.

**Stems:** Rigid and woody stems. Stems are green and photosynthetic. Young branches have 5 green ridges with hairs. Stems become smooth as they mature. Mature plants can be between 1 - 3 m tall.

**Leaves:** Lower leaves are stalked and composed of 3 leaflets, while upper leaves are single and un-stalked. Leaves are egg-shaped to oblong and 5 - 20 mm long, and may fall off early in the year, leaving stalks bare.

**Roots:** Has a deep, branched taproot.

**Seeds:** Yellow flowers mature to form flattened seedpods (legume-like) that change from bright green to brown or black before they dry out and split. Each pod contains between 5 - 12 seeds.

### Similar Species:

- **Native:** Deciduous Yellow Azalea (*Rhododendron luteum*)
- **Invasive:** Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), Bird's Foot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Spanish Broom (*Spartium junceum*), St. John's Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*)

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**Vectors of Spread:** When seedpods dry, they split and can expel seeds up to 5 m away. The seeds are also dispersed by wind, vehicles, animals, humans and in soil.

#### WHAT CAN I DO?

Scotch Broom can be found in Squamish, the lower mainland and parts of Vancouver Island. The goal is to eradicate it in Whistler and Pemberton, and PREVENTION is key to prevent further spread:

- Regularly monitor properties for 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.
- Quickly re-vegetating disturbed areas with fast-growing competitive, native plants can limit growth of Scotch Broom and is a fundamental tool to limit its spread.
- Minimize soil disturbance in area surrounding infestation.
- Ensure plants (particularly flowers, seeds or root fragments) are bagged or covered to prevent spread during transport to designated disposal sites (e.g. landfill). **Do NOT compost.**

Scotch Broom control requires a long-term approach (due to the long-lived seedbank), and can include:

- **Cultural Control:** Grazing by goats and chickens has been shown to reduce some infestations.
- **Mechanical Control:** Small seedlings (less than 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 Scotch Broom's need for 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:** Several species of seed-feeding beetles have been released into Scotch Broom populations south of the BC-Washington border. Biological control agents have not yet been shown to reduce Scotch Broom density in established populations, but do help to reduce spread, especially in combination with other removal efforts.

**There is currently a containment line north of Squamish. If you suspect you have found Scotch Broom anywhere in Whistler or Pemberton:**

**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:** Coastal Invasive Species Committee, Eflora BC, Invasive Species Council of BC, Invasive Species Council of Metro Vancouver, King County, Nature Conservancy Canada, University of California IPM Program, UC Davis, Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board.



## IMPACTS

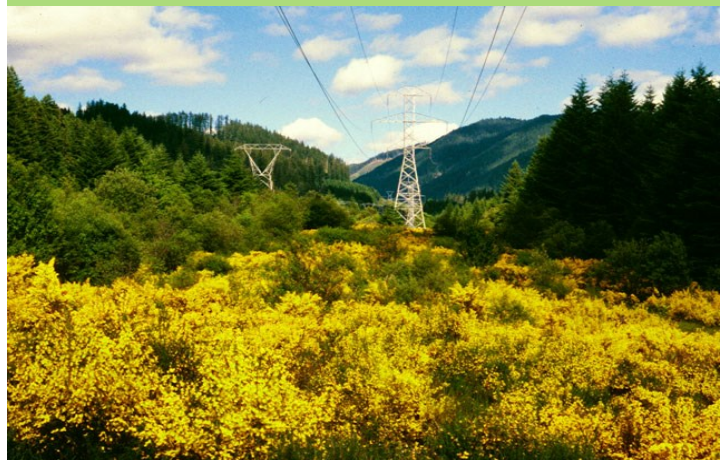
B. Brett

#### Ecological:

- Dense thickets create fire hazards due to resinous sap in stems
- Dense thickets also limit the movement of large animals
- Displaces native plant and animal species
- Outshades conifer seedlings
- Alters nitrogen composition of soil
- Toxic to livestock is ingested

#### Economic:

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



## REPORT SIGHTINGS

Visit [ssisc.ca/report](https://ssisc.ca/report)

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