

BROOM Cape/Montpellier & Scotch/English

(*Genista monspessulana* & *Cytisus scoparius*)

Jackie Miles/Max Campbell



Weed: Cape/Montpellier broom

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Why is broom a weed?

- Brooms, and closely related gorse, are highly invasive in cooler areas, in both environmental and agricultural land
- Produces up to 50,000 seeds/sq m, so control is costly and difficult if plants are allowed to establish
- Grow to dominate the understorey of otherwise undisturbed native open forest and woodland
- Long lived (up to 25yrs) and dense infestations provide habitat for rabbits and pigs
- Can cause digestive problems in horses and seeds are poisonous to humans (especially children) if swallowed
- Allegedly sterile, hybrid forms of both Cape and Scotch brooms are still sold in nurseries. These have been observed to produce seed and revert to the wild type, and should not be planted

Description

Cape broom:

Plant: shrub 1-4m high, flowering in spring, ribbed stems and leaves

Leaves: trifoliate (three leaflets, like clover), arranged alternatively along branchlets

Seeds: in pods that are hairy all over, green to black when ripe

Flowers: pure yellow

Scotch broom:

Plant: erect shrub 1-2m high, stems are strongly ribbed

Leaves: generally leafless however younger plants may have a few leaves composed of either one or three leaflets

Seeds: in pods that are hairy around the margins, green to black when ripe

Flowers: pure bright yellow pea flowers in spring borne on green ribbed stems

CSIRO



Weed: Scotch broom infestation

Fact sheets are available from the Molonglo Conservation Group website. Visit www.molonglo.org.au or call 62992119 for more information about getting involved in your living environment.

Information used to compile this fact sheet was kindly provided by the Southern Tablelands and South Coast Noxious Plants Committee: www.southeastweeds.org.au

Dispersal via

- Dumped, seed-bearing garden waste or movement of seed-contaminated soil
- Explosive release of seeds around parent plants
- Carried in wool of sheep or on other animals feeding among plants during the seeding period

Status

Scotch broom is listed as a class 4 noxious weed in all council areas within the Molonglo Catchment. The growth and spread of the plant must be controlled in accordance with local management plans published by each local council. Cape broom is not listed as noxious in the NSW section of the Molonglo Catchment, however it is advised that it be managed similarly to Scotch broom.

In the ACT, both Cape and Scotch broom are class 2 and 4 Pest Plants which must be suppressed and whose supply is prohibited.

Look-alikes

Native plants can often be confused with weed species. The following information aims to assist you with accurate identification to prevent the loss of our declining natives. If you are unsure what species you are dealing with, take advantage of the identification services on offer from your local weeds officer (either at your local council or the ACT's Parks, Conservation and Lands) before carrying out any controls.

There are a number of other similar plants, some of which are natives and should not be removed and some of which are also weeds. Weedy look-alikes include **flax-leaf broom**, **Spanish broom** and **gorse** (see the gorse fact sheet for photos of this species).

Most native shrubs in the pea family can be distinguished from Scotch and Cape broom by the yellow flowers that have blotches of brown, red or orange - not pure yellow. However, two natives that break this rule are **glory-peas** (*Gompholobium latifolium*) with 3 leaflets, and **goldentip** (*Goodia lotifolia*) with 3 leaflets and yellow flowers with a touch of red. Neither have hairy pods.

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Native: *glory-pea*.

Distinguishing feature – no hairy pods

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Native: *goldentip*.

Distinguishing feature – no hairy pods

Control methods

The same control methods can be applied to both Cape and Scotch broom. For advice on what time of year to implement the following management options, see the Molonglo Catchment Weed Control Calendar. Seek advice on chemical application from your Council Weeds Officer or local "bush friendly" nursery. Always use chemicals as directed on the label.

Cut and paint or spray larger plants. Smaller plants can be hand-pulled or dug. Seed is long-lived in the soil and seedling growth after removal of the parent plants will need follow-up. Spray if seedling growth is prolific or hand-pull.

Prolific seed production and long viability means a large soil seed bank, which will continue to germinate for many years after mature plants are removed. Fire may be helpful in germinating most seed so seedlings can be sprayed, but fire without follow-up control of regrowth is only likely to make the situation worse. Consult the Rural Fire Service for permits and advice before using fire as part of your management methods; in urban areas also contact the local council/control authority.

Several broom species and cultivars are still sold in nurseries but should be avoided as all have weed potential. If you have broom in your garden, replace it with an equally attractive flowering native shrub that can attract birds and wildlife to your garden.