



# Whatcom Weeds

Whatcom County Noxious Weed Control Board 322 N. Commercial St. Bellingham WA 98225  
(360) 715-7470 [www.co.whatcom.wa.us/publicworks/weeds](http://www.co.whatcom.wa.us/publicworks/weeds)

## SCOTCH BROOM

*Cytisus scoparius*

**THREAT:** Scotch broom, a plant native to Europe, was introduced into North America as a garden ornamental. It is an aggressive plant, invading roadsides, parks and pastures. Seeds are produced in large quantities and can survive in the soil for 60 years. The seeds are contained in pods and are thrown from the parent plant when the mature pods suddenly split open. Seeds are further transported by vehicle tires, heavy equipment, in contaminated gravel, as well as by birds and by ants.

**DESCRIPTION:** Scotch broom is a perennial evergreen shrub in the legume family. It grows up to 10 feet tall. It has stiff, dark green branches, which grow more or less erect, and often have few leaves. The lower leaves have three lobes, while the upper leaves are simple. Scotch broom has bright yellow flowers, which are shaped like pea flowers and are about 3/4 inch long. The plants bloom from April to June, forming green seedpods, which turn black or brown as they mature. The pods each contain several seeds. There are several other introduced brooms, which are similar to Scotch broom and may also be invasive.

**CONTROL:** Scotch broom can be controlled through mechanical and chemical means. Repeated cultivation can be used to control seedlings. Larger plants can be dug out or pulled out with a "weed wrench". Cutting, mowing and/or stripping the bark off larger plants may also kill the plant. Contact the weed board for site-specific chemical recommendations.

