



Weed of the Month: Spanish Broom

Welcome to our "Weed of the Month" feature, designed to raise awareness about the impact of noxious invasive weeds on our environment. This month, we're focusing on Spanish Broom (*Spartium junceum*), an aggressive plant species that poses a significant threat to native ecosystems and agricultural lands.

Identification & Invasive Behavior

Common Name: Spanish Broom

Scientific Name: *Spartium junceum*

Spanish Broom is a deciduous shrub found throughout the Western part of California. It was introduced as a landscape ornamental and was planted along highways to prevent soil erosion. Spanish Broom may grow into monospecific stands, excluding native species.

It is native to the Mediterranean region and the Canary, Madeira, and Azores Islands. Spanish Broom is 10-15 ft. tall. The stems are long, smooth, slender, cylindrical and erect with a few branches. The leaves are 0.5-1 inch long, oval, and smooth margins. The yellow, pea-like flowers are large, up to 1 inch long, and grow on short stalks on both sides of the main stem.



Spanish Broom leaflets



Spanish Broom seedlings

Impact

Spanish Broom is unpalatable to most livestock (except goats), therefore decreasing rangeland value while increasing fire hazards. These leguminous plants produce copious amounts of seed, and may resprout from the root crown if cut or grazed.

It is known for its fast growth, ability to form dense thickets, and high seed production, which can remain viable for decades. Spanish Broom can outcompete native vegetation, create fire hazards, and disrupt local ecosystems.

Control & Management

Patience and careful practice are key when it comes to the eradication of Spanish Broom.

Mechanical control methods include hand pulling and cutting the broom off before it flowers. These methods are good for small shrubs that have not yet been established, it will reduce seed production and will deplete the plant's energy reserves. For larger, established shrubs, a weed wrench or woody weed extractor can be used. Cutting should be combined with an herbicide treatment or with multiple cuttings over a period of years.

Chemical control methods should be applied in the postemergence stage when the plants are growing rapidly. Aromatic amino acid inhibitors and branched-chain amino acid inhibitors are also effective.



Prevention

Identification is key when it comes to preventing and controlling the spread of Spanish Broom. Routinely inspect and maintain your property for any signs of this invader. Be vigilant for any signs of this weed in your area and report sightings to the Sutter County Agricultural Commissioner's Office at (530) 822-7500.

By staying informed and taking proactive measures, we can work together to curb the spread of Spanish Broom (*Spartium junceum*) and protect our native ecosystems. Join us next month for a new "Weed of the Month" feature, where we'll highlight another noxious invasive plant and share tips on how to address it.

For more information about Spanish Broom, feel free to visit the California Invasive Plant Council website:

<https://www.cal-ipc.org/plants/profile/spartium-junceum/profile/>

For more information about our other county programs, visit our website at:

<https://www.suttercounty.org/government/count-y-departments/agricultural-department>

Thank you for your dedication to preserving our environment and agricultural land!

**-Sutter County Agricultural
Commissioner's Office**



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