

“B” Rated Weeds

A weed of economic importance which is regionally abundant,
but may have limited distribution in some counties

French broom

Genista monspessulana

Other common names: Cape broom,
Montpellier broom

USDA symbol: GEMO2

ODA rating: B



Introduction: French broom originated from throughout Mediterranean Europe and northwest Africa, the Azores, and the Canary Islands. It is common in warmer, moister, lower elevation areas. It was introduced into the U.S. as an ornamental.

Distribution in Oregon: The first documented site of French broom in Oregon was found in Curry County in 1924. It is common in the southern coastal counties with smaller populations north of there. Lane County hosts a population that spans several thousand gross acres.

Description: French broom is a leafy perennial shrub growing three to ten feet tall. It is in the legume family. It is similar in appearance to scotch broom except plants do not grow as erect, leaves are larger, trifoliate, numerous and are retained the entire year. Its yellow flowers emerge April through June. They are smaller, but still distinctly pea-like.

Impacts: This plant is an aggressive pioneer species, taking advantage of land disturbances to establish and spread. In California, large infestations significantly increase the costs of reforestation in commercial timberlands. During the dry season, thick broom stands create a severe fire hazard. Annual costs for broom removal on road shoulders, power line corridors, and commercial or non-commercial property reach millions of dollars yearly.

Biological controls: The scotch broom seed beetle and weevil *Bruchidius villosus* and *Exapion fuscirostre* do not appear to feed or reproduce on French broom. There are no available species at this time specific to French broom.

