

Scotchbroom

Cytisus scoparius (L.) Link

Alternate Names

Englishbroom

Synonyms

Sarothamnus scoparius (L.) Wimmer ex Koch

Description

Scotchbroom is a woody shrub that grows up to 10 feet tall with many erect branches that are angled and dark green. Leaves are mostly 3-parted with entire leaflets. Leaflets are obovate to oblanceolate, $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of an inch long. Flowers are showy, yellow, and abundant, and are usually borne solitarily in axils. Pods are flattened and brown or black with white hair on the margins.

Similar Species

There are several weedy species of the genus *Cytisus* that grow on the Pacific Coast and Cascade Mountains, but none are native to Alaska (Whitson et al. 2000). Gorse (*Ulex europaeus* L.) is another invasive shrub not yet known to occur in Alaska with yellow pea-like flowers and dense sharp spines, while Siberian peashrub (*Caragana arborescens* Lam., included in this book) has pinnate leaves. Spanish broom (*Spartium junceum* L.)



The Nature Conservancy photo by Barry A. Rice



UAF Cooperative Extension Service photo by Jamie Snyder

Scotchbroom tagged for removal.

Family: Fabaceae

Scotchbroom

is another exotic plant not yet in Alaska and can be distinguished from Scotchbroom by its fragrant flowers and rounded, bright green stems.

Management

Hand-pulling, cutting, or mowing can be used for Scotchbroom control. Herbicides are also effective. Root pieces that remain in the soil will resprout to form new plants, and so monitoring is needed after treatment (Hoshovsky 1986). Use of a brush chipper may be desirable to dispose of cut or pulled plants. Biological control may become a future option, given that there are several Scotchbroom-feeding insects from Europe.

Notes

Scotchbroom was introduced as an ornamental to the Pacific Northwest, where it escaped cultivation. The Latin genus name *Cytisus* may be corruption of the name of a Greek island, Cythnus, where a broom species abounded and was written about by Pliny.



USDA Forest Service photo by Tom Heutte



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