

# “B” Rated Weeds

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

**Spanish broom**  
*Spartium junceum*

**Other common names:** weaver’s broom

**USDA symbol:** SPJU2  
**ODA rating:** B



**Introduction:** Spanish broom is native to countries in the Mediterranean region of Europe. It was introduced and sold as an ornamental in California in the mid-1800s. The plant is thick-stemmed and very drought tolerant. When in bloom it is a very showy plant.

**Distribution in Oregon:** It is relatively rare in Oregon though there is one large infestation in Douglas County with smaller occurrences in the Willamette Valley and Southern Oregon.

**Description:** Spanish broom is a perennial leguminous shrub growing up to 7 feet high. It is an attractive plant, historically used as an ornamental. It is similar in appearance to Scotch broom except Spanish broom’s stems are thicker and rougher, it has very few leaves, and the flowers are larger and fewer in number. It flowers from April through June. In its native range, stems and fibers are used to make baskets, mats, ropes, and paper. Flowers were used for yellow dye and provide oil for perfume. Seeds can remain viable in the soil for more than 80 years.

**Impacts:** The least abundant of the weedy brooms in Oregon, Spanish broom is adapted to dryer sites where its lack of leaves and thick waxy stems resist desiccation. Like other broom species, it offers strong competition to native plants and contributes to increased maintenance costs on lands where it becomes established. As with most brooms, dry summer plants create a severe fire hazard and just like other brooms, Spanish broom is unpalatable to most livestock except goats. Pollen production during bloom time also can be quite an allergen source for allergy sufferers.

**Biological controls:** One approved biocontrol agent, a beetle which feeds on seeds in its larval stage and pollen in the adult stage, has become established in Oregon but is threatened by a parasitic wasp.

