

# Broom

Spanish broom (*Spartium junceum*)  
Montpellier broom (*Genista monspessulana*)  
White broom (*Cytisus multiflorus*)  
Broom (*Cytisus scoparius*)



## Identification

- Usually evergreen, small-leaved shrubs
- Tough and flexible green branches
- Pea-like, scented flowers
- Brown or black explosive seed pods crack open on hot days



White broom and broom flowers Photo: G. Livingstone (ECan)



Montpellier broom Photo: M. von Tippelskirch (ECan)

## Where are they found?

Broom invades pasture, roadsides, forestry blocks, low alpine areas, native grasslands, dry scrubland and braided riverbeds.

## Why are they a problem?

Broom can invade a wide range of habitats, potentially causing negative economic and environmental impacts. Prolific seeders, broom grows and spreads rapidly forming dense stands. Because broom species are nitrogen-fixing colonising plants they can alter the soil composition, increasing the potential for further weed invasion. Fire and cultivation encourage seed germination.

## Control

Introduced broom species can be mistaken for New Zealand native broom species (refer to table overleaf). Ensure the target species is correctly identified before control methods are applied.

Control methods include applying a chemical foliar spray (effective for large areas and scattered plants) or cutting and stump treating plants (useful in ecologically sensitive areas). Mechanical control by mowing, trimming, pulling, digging or cultivation and grazing regimes are also useful methods where terrain allows. Biological control agents (i.e. insects, mites and rusts) can reduce plant vigour and rate of spread.

Use all herbicides in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and ensure no herbicide comes into contact with other plants, the soil or waterways.



Broom invading a hillside Photo: R. McCaw (ECan)

## Key identification features of broom species

Broom species	Stems	Flowers	Leaves
Spanish broom <i>Spartium junceum</i>	Round, smooth, and green. Up to 5 cm thick.	Yellow. Approx. 2.5 cm long. Grow in clusters at branch ends (September—March).	Simple.
Montpellier broom <i>Genista monspessulana</i> ( <i>Teline monspessulana</i> )	Slender, round, ribbed, green and woody when older.	Yellow up to 1.3 cm long. Grouped (3–9) in short racemes (May—November).	Narrow, oval, hairy, trifoliolate (leaf three-parted). Very 'leafy' compared to other broom species.
White broom <i>Cytisus multiflorus</i>	Slender, angled, ribbed, green and woody when older.	White with a pink streak at base. Up to 1 cm long. (September—April).	Trifoliolate, hairy, often simple on younger twigs.
Broom <i>Cytisus scoparius</i>	Slender, smooth, green, and woody when older. Prominent 5-angles.	Yellow (or a mixture of yellow, red or brown). Approx. 2.5 cm long. (September—April).	Usually trifoliolate. Simple on younger twigs. Deciduous.
New Zealand native broom species <i>Carmichaelia</i> species	Many tend to have flattened green stems/branches (some up to 1.5 cm wide).	Most are purple or pink and white, approx. 0.5 cm long.	Many species have almost no leaves. When leaves are present they are 1–5 foliolate and usually occur on young plants or plants growing in the shade.



Spanish broom flowers, stem and leaves Photo: M. von Tippelskirch (ECan)



Native broom species in flower. Photo: M. von Tippelskirch (ECan)

For further information on broom and control methods visit:

- [www.ecan.govt.nz](http://www.ecan.govt.nz) (search key word 'broom')
- [www.weedbusters.org.nz](http://www.weedbusters.org.nz)