# Scotch Broom Encyclopedia Article

## Scotch Broom

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# Contents

Scotch Broom Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

Scotch Broom.....3

# Scotch Broom

Scotch broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) is a member of the pea family that is native to southern Europe and northern Africa. It can grow up to 10 ft (3 m) in height. Scotch broom's yellow flowers are shaped like peas, and its leaves each have three leaflets.

During the 1800s, Scotch broom was introduced into the United States as an ornamental plant. In addition, people used the plant for sweeping and make beer and tea with the seeds. During the mid-1800s, Scotch broom was planted in the western United States to stabilize roads and prevent **soil erosion**. By the end of the twentieth century, the nonnative plant was classified as an invasive weed in the Pacific Northwest and in parts of the northeastern United States and southeastern Canada.

Scotch broom is a hearty plant that grows quickly. Its seeds can last 80 years. Thick fields of Scotch broom can crowd out vegetation that is native to an area. Spread of the plant can reduce the amount of grazing **habitat** for animals. Broom can block pathways used by **wildlife**. In addition, broom can be a fire hazard.

Methods of controlling the spread of Scotch broom include removing the plant by its roots, spraying **herbicide**, and controlled burning to destroy seeds.