Image: Scotch Broom | Sea to Sky Invasives Species Council

Management of *Cytisus scoparius* (scotch broom)

Lewis and Clark County Noxious
Weed Control District
3402 Cooney Dr Helena | MT 59602

Montana Priority 1B Noxious Weed

Plant Description

Cytisus scoparius, scotch broom, is a fast-growing deciduous shrub that grows 3 meters tall. The stems are green, strongly angled, covered with wavy hairs; with age, they become smooth and woody. The leaves are arranged alternately along the stems. Basal leaves are composed of three leaflets and the upper leaves are simple with no petiole, attaching directly to the stem. The bright yellow flowers occur in long terminal racemes. Scotch broom begins flowering from 18 months to 3 years of age at which point seeds are produced, and ejected from the pods, remaining viable in soil for up to 30 years.

Mechanical Control

Hand removal of seedlings and small shrubs may provide effective control, ensure complete root removal to prevent regrowth; bag and dispose of all plant material. Heavy equipment can be used to remove larger plants; however, stump resprout is common, so integrated management approaches are recommended for effective control.


Image: J Leekie

Biological Control

Several biocontrol agents have been released in the United States but none are present in Montana.

Cultural Control

Scotch broom is toxic to cattle. Goats will graze, and repeated grazing for several seasons has shown successful control. High intensity controlled burns, especially in mid-summer have shown the most effective control for both plants and seeds; fire can stimulate seed bank germination. Revegetation is important. Introduce desirable species, especially in areas with disturbance. Plant competition prevents the invasion of new and existing unwanted vegetation.

Recommended Treatment Timeline			
Control Type	Spring	Summer	Fall
Mechanical	Hand pull, Remove with machinery	Hand pull, Remove with machinery	Hand pull, Remove with machinery
Biological	None available		
Cultural	Graze, Controlled burn, Revegetation	Graze,	Controlled burn, Revegetation
Chemical	Foliar spray, Cut stump treatment, Basal bark treatment	Foliar spray, Cut stump treatment, Basal bark treatment	Foliar spray, Cut stump treatment, Basal bark treatment

Chemical Control

Follow the directions on herbicide labels, the label is the law. Calibrate equipment for accurate application. Commonly used herbicides are listed below, order of listing is not reflective of efficacy or recommendation.

Personal protective equipment must be worn when applying herbicides. Only apply herbicides in appropriate weather conditions.[a]

Use appropriate surfactants as listed in the product label.[a]

[a]Read and follow all instructions in the label of the herbicide.

Chemical Control Table							
Use Site	Herbicide (Active Ingredient - Trademark)	Pre-emergent or Soil Residual Activity	Post-emergent (Foliar Applied)	Large Sprayer Rate per Acre	Spot Treatment Rate for Every 1 Gallon of Water	Restricted Entry Interval (Hours)	Application Notes and Environmental Advisories*
Rangeland, Pasture, Forest, Non-Cropland Areas, ROW	Triclopyr - Garlon 3A[b], Garlon 4 Ultra[b]	no	yes	Foliar Applied Garlon 3A- 3 - 4 qt OR Garlon 4 Ultra- 2 - 3 qt	Foliar Applied Garlon 3A-1 to 1.5% plus 0.25 to 0.5% v/v surfactant, OR Garlon 4 Ultra- 0.75 to 1.5% v/v solution plus 0.25 to 0.5% v/v surfactant Basal Cut Stump Garlon 4 Ultra- 20% v/v Cut Stump Garlon 3A- undiluted or 50% v/v Basal Bark Garlon 4 Ultra- 20% v/v + 20% v/v ethylated oil	48- Garlon 3A 12- Garlon 4 Ultra	Foliar apply when plants are rapidly growing. Cut stump and basal bark treatments can be applied at any time as long as the ground is not frozen. Toxic to fish and aquatic invertebrates. Groundwater and surface water advisories.
Rangeland, Permanent Grass Pastures, CRP, Non-Cropland Areas	Triclopyr + 2,4-D- Crossbow[b]	no	yes	1.5 gallons	1 – 1.5% v/v solution	48	Apply when plants are rapidly growing from late summer to early fall. Groundwater and surface water advisory. Non-target organism advisory.
Ornamentals	Glyphosate - Roundup ProMax[b]	no	yes	1.3 - 3.3 qt (Roundup ProMax[b])	1 - 1.5% v/v solution (Roundup ProMax[b])	4	Nonselective. Best applied in late summer or early fall. Surface water advisory.

[b]Lewis and Clark County Noxious Weed Control Division does not endorse any trademarks or commercial names listed above.

This table summarizes selected registered use sites and is not intended to represent all approved uses. Pesticide applicability, use sites, and restrictions vary by product and formulation. Applicators must consult and follow the most current product label, which takes precedence over this document.

References

BASF Corporation. (2012). *Arsenal.* U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Registration No. 241-346.

Bayer Cropscience. (2020). *Roundup ProMax.* U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Registration No. 524-579.

Corteva Agriscience. (2023). *Garlon 4 Ultra.* U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Registration No. 62719-527

Corteva Agriscience. (2025). *Tordon* 22k. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Registration No. 62719-6.

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Scotch Broom — Cytisus scoparius. Montana Field Guide. Montana Natural Heritage Program. https://FieldGuide.mt.gov/speciesDetail.aspx?elcode=PDFAB18060

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