

Common invasive plants in the Columbia-Pacific

BY REBECCA LEXA

Recently, just before National Invasive Species Awareness Week, I highlighted how invasive species negatively affect local ecosystems and why they should be removed whenever possible. The following is a list of some common and perniciously invasive plant species in the Columbia-Pacific region, along with some ideas for keeping them under control.

Scotch broom (*Cytisus scoparius*)

In the spring, these tall, spindly shrubs begin to produce bright yellow flowers, some with small red splotches on the petals. Scotch broom can grow to more than 10 feet tall, and large thickets often crowd out other native plant species. Surrounding plants should be removed as this invasive shrub can regenerate from stumps. A

lever tool makes extraction easier. Very large plants with stems 2 inches or more in diameter may be cut as low to the ground as possible.

Gorse (*Ulex europeaus*)

Be careful when dealing with this prickly green plant. Gorse is covered in sharp green thorns. Like Scotch broom, it grows in massive thickets that crowd out other plants, producing large clusters of yellow flowers. Its oily tissues

are also highly flammable, so it poses significant wildfire risk. When handling gorse, always wear thick gloves, long sleeves and eye protection.

European and Atlantic beach grasses (*Ammophila arenaria* and *Ammophila brevigulata*)

Those wide swaths of grass decorating the dunes of Oregon and

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Many of the patches of grass seen on Oregon beaches are non-native.

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