



# Gorse and broom

## Why are they a pest?

Gorse and broom are pests because they produce massive numbers of long-living seeds, mature and grow rapidly, and are able to establish in a range of habitats.

These pests can form thick groups of bushes, outcompete native vegetation and prevent stock from grazing — they are generally seen as a threat to economic and environmental values. They tolerate a wide range of temperatures and rainfalls; withstand wind, salt, damage and grazing pressure; and can grow in most soil types.

Gorse and broom seeds are dispersed by explosive seed pods, water and human-mediated activity through contamination of vehicles, livestock and machinery. Seeds are long-living and can remain dormant in the soil for 40–80 years. Gorse and broom will grow well across habitat types anywhere in Otago.

Currently, large areas of Central Otago and the Queenstown Lakes are mostly clear of infestations. Gorse and broom are considered pests in the Otago Regional Pest Management Plan (2019–2029) in gorse- and broom-free areas and rural-zoned properties.



Gorse



Broom

## Is it gorse or broom?

### Gorse

Sharp,  
needle-like  
leaves



Grows up  
to 4 m  
tall

- **Size:** Sharp, spiny, woody perennial shrub that grows up to 4 metres tall.
- **Leaves:** Reduced to a sharp, spine-like tip.
- **Flowers:** Bright yellow and visible from May to November.
- **Seed pod:** Hairy, pea-like pod, green-brown maturing to black.
- **Root system:** Very deep taproots with extensive lateral roots.
- **Habitats:** Include grasslands, shrublands, forest margins, plantations, hill country, coastal habitats, sand dunes and wastelands.

### Broom

No  
spikes



Larger  
flowers

Grows  
up to 3 m  
tall

- **Size:** Woody perennial shrub that grows up to 3 metres tall.
- **Leaves:** Sparse, small, hairy and grouped in threes.
- **Flowers:** Bright yellow with a dark pinkish streak near the base, visible in spring and summer.
- **Seed pods:** Hairy, pea-like pod, green-brown maturing to black.
- **Root system:** One main stout taproot.
- **Habitats:** Include lowland and mountain areas, shrublands, grasslands, steep slopes, open forests, riparian areas, riverbeds, wastelands, disturbed habitats, pastures and plantations.

## What are the rules?

The simplified rules in the Otago Regional Pest Management Plan (2019–2029) include:

- Everyone within the gorse- and broom-free areas (including the extended areas) must eliminate gorse and broom on the land that they occupy.
- Everyone outside the gorse and broom free areas on rural-zoned land must eliminate gorse and broom 10 metres from their property boundary where the neighbouring property is eliminating gorse or broom 10 metres on their side of that boundary.

For a more detailed explanation of the programme and rules, see pages 48–52 of the Otago Regional Pest Management Plan (2019–2029).

## What should I do?

### Physical control:

- Hand-pull seedlings and small plants. For larger shrubs, cut trunk into manageable sections to be dug out. Ensure you dig out the roots for effective removal.

### Chemical control:

- Cut down the plant and treat the stump near the ground using a suitable herbicide gel containing either metsulfuron, triclopyr or glyphosate.
- Spray when the plant is actively growing using suitable herbicides such as Tordon or Grazon.

### Biocontrol agents:

- Biocontrol agents for both gorse and broom are present throughout Otago. Find a list at [orc.govt.nz/gorseandbroom](http://orc.govt.nz/gorseandbroom)

**Caution:** When using any herbicide or pesticide, PLEASE READ THE LABEL THOROUGHLY to ensure that all instructions and safety requirements are followed.

**Disclaimer:** Mention of product trade names does not endorse these products nor imply criticism of similar products not mentioned. The Otago Regional Council does not give any warranty that the information is accurate or complete or that it is suitable for all circumstances.



### Common name:

Gorse

### Scientific name:

*Ulex europeaus*

### Management programme:

Sustained control



### Common name:

Broom (used for common and montpellier)

### Scientific name:

*Cytisus scoparius* (common)

*Teline monspessulana*  
(Montpellier broom)

### Management programme:

Sustained control

For more information, visit [orc.govt.nz/gorseandbroom](http://orc.govt.nz/gorseandbroom)

