



Ulex europaeus

WA – Class B Noxious Weed, Prohibited Plant List

OR – Class B Noxious Weed

Gorse

European Gorse, Irish Furze

Family: Fabaceae

Origins: Native to Europe, it was introduced to the west coast as an ornamental plant prior to 1894.

Range: Gorse has been recorded on the east and west coasts of the United States. Infestations in Washington and Oregon are more dense west of the Cascades.

Habitat: Commonly grows in open areas, roadsides, riparian areas, and grasslands. It prefers sandy or gravelly soils in moist areas but can grow in areas of drought as well.

Impact: Gorse grows outward, forming dense thickets with dry, dead plant parts in the center. The high oil content in plant parts combined with the dried vegetation creates a severe fire hazard. It can fixate nitrogen and change soil chemistry to prevent nutrient exchange. Each plant can produce 18,000 seeds, which are heat tolerant and remain viable in the soil for 30 or more years. Heat stimulates germination, and a light burn will cause a flush of seedlings; plants can also re-grow from roots and stumps.

Description: Gorse is a dense, perennial, evergreen shrub reaching 10 feet tall and 30 feet wide. It is stout and upright with spreading branches, angular stems, and a terminal thorn. Stems change from green to brown as they mature. Branches end in sharp spines and have stiff spine-like leaves about 2 inches long. The yellow, pea-like flowers are 0.5 to 0.75 inches long and grow in clusters near the branches' ends. The brown seed pods (resembling pea pods) burst, expelling seeds when ripe. Flowers typically bloom from January to March but can bloom all year round.

Common Look-Alikes: Scotch Broom, Spanish Broom.

** Gorse is not known to be toxic. Look-alike Scotch Broom seeds are toxic to humans and livestock. Ingestion by humans may result in abdominal pain, nausea, and vomiting.*



Integrated Pest Management - Control Methods

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) combines various methods such as mechanical, cultural, biological, and chemical controls to manage pests. IPM offers the possibility of improving the efficiency of pest control while reducing its negative environmental impacts. For more information, see the Cowlitz County Noxious Weed's IPM Resources & Strategy Guide or contact your local Noxious Weed Control Board to develop a customized IPM plan.

Non-Herbicide Control

Mechanical (pulling, cutting, digging, etc.)

Hand pulling or digging can be effective for small infestations if all roots are removed. Chopping, cutting, or mowing is an option. However, since Gorse can re-grow any time of the year, it is only effective if the site is monitored. Repeat treatments will be necessary to deplete root reserve. For best results, use in combination with herbicides.

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Cultural	<p>Cultivation and establishing competitive pasture species, forest trees, or other crops help resist Gorse invasions. Prescribed burning can be used to remove old growth before making an herbicide application. Buring alone is not effective and may encourage the seeds already in the soil to germinate and cause the stumps to re-grow.</p> <p><i>*Gorse is high in oil and is considered a fire hazard. Check with the local fire department for rules and regulations related to controlled burning.</i></p>
Biological	<p>Goats are a cost-effective control method for seedlings. Chickens may eat Gorse seeds and destroy the seeds through the digestion process.</p>

Herbicide Control: Foliar Broadcast Treatment

<p>Glyphosate (Rodeo, Killzall, Kleenup, Roundup)</p>	<p>Timing: Apply to actively growing plants after bloom drop in the spring. Remarks: Spray complete uniform coverage, but not to the point of runoff; dust on plants may reduce effectiveness; Glyphosate is nonselective and may injure or kill any vegetation it contacts; refer to the label for use in aquatic areas.</p>
<p>Triclopyr Ester / Triclopyr Amine (Garlon 4, Remedy / Garlon 3A)</p>	<p>Timing: Apply to actively growing plants after bloom drop in the spring. Remarks: Spray complete uniform coverage; dust on plants may reduce effectiveness; Garlon products are registered for rights-of-way, industrial sites, and forestry sites; refer to the label for use in aquatic areas.</p>
<p>Triclopyr +2,4-D (Crossbow, Crossroad, Brush Killer)</p>	<p>Timing: Apply to actively growing plants after bloom drop in the spring. Remarks: Observe all grazing and harvesting restrictions; avoid drift to sensitive crops; dust on plants may reduce effectiveness; refer to the label for use in aquatic areas.</p>
<p>Metsulfuron (Escort, MSM)</p>	<p>Timing: Apply to actively growing plants after bloom drop in the spring. Remarks: Do not allow spray to drift to sensitive crops; apply only to pasture, rangeland, and non-crop sites; application sites differ between products; for best results, use a surfactant; do not apply near water.</p>
<p>Aminocyclopyrachlor + metsulfuron-methyl (Streamline)</p>	<p>Timing: Apply to actively growing woody plants. Remarks: Even low rates can kill non-target tree and shrub species, avoid application near sensitive species; applications to stressed plants may reduce control; do not allow spray to drift off-target; do not apply near water.</p>
<p>Dicamba (Banvel, Clarity, Rifle)</p>	<p>Timing: Apply to actively growing plants after bloom drop in the spring. Remarks: Avoid drift to sensitive crops; refer to label for grazing restrictions; remove meat animals from treated area 30 days before slaughter; do not apply near water.</p>

Herbicide Control: Cut Stump Treatment

<p>Glyphosate (Rodeo, Killzall, Kleenup, Roundup)</p>	<p>Timing: Apply to actively growing plants and full leave expansion. Remarks: Cut the trunk off at the base and immediately apply concentrated Glyphosate to the freshly cut surface; delays in an application may reduce performance; refer to the label for use in aquatic areas.</p>
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* Cowlitz County Noxious Weed Control Board does not endorse any product or brand name. Brand names are listed as an example only. Other commercial products may contain the listed active chemical for herbicide control. Always read and follow the safety protocols and rate recommendations on the herbicide label. **The Label is The Law.**

This control sheet includes excerpts from the Written Findings of the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board (WSNWCB), nwcw.wa.gov. Herbicide information from the PNW Weed Management Handbook (ISBN 978-1-931979-22-1) and product labels.