"B" Rated Weeds

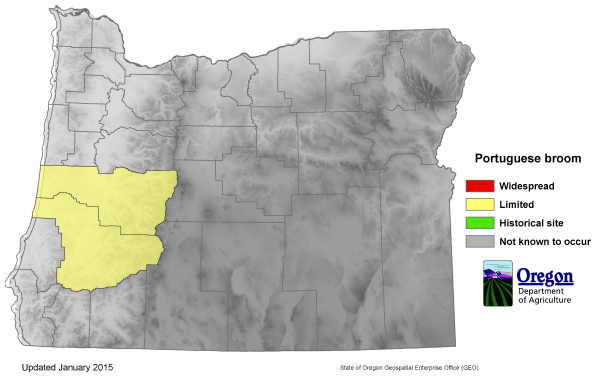
A weed of economic importance which is regionally abundant, but may have limited distribution in some counties

Portuguese broom
Cytisus striatus

Other common names: striated broom, hairy-fruited broom

USDA symbol: CYST7
ODA rating: B and T

Introduction: Native to Spain and Portugal, Portuguese broom was introduced to North America as an ornamental and for sand stabilization purposes. Its introduction on the coast along with scotch broom can be attributed to dune stabilization projects in the 1930's. It thrives in sand dunes, forestlands and on right-of-ways in Oregon. With little or no insect herbivory directed at it, Portuguese broom grows to remarkable size with the largest truck diameter recorded at 14 inches in Douglas County.



Distribution in Oregon: Infestations are limited to two Oregon counties: Douglas and Lane. The main coastal site was identified in Lane County in 1982 or possibly earlier, south of Florence. A second large infestation is located in the Cox Creek watershed in Douglas County.

Description: Portuguese broom is a perennial leguminous shrub growing up to 10 feet tall. It's appearance is similar to scotch broom except the pods are completely hairy, giving them the appearance of being pussy willow buds. The stems are more silvery compared to scotch broom, and the flowers are a more pale yellow color. The bark has a distinct vertical striated appearance.

Impacts: Portuguese broom is highly competitive to native shrubs and trees. It provides no food for wildlife and aids in wildfire ignition and spread. Infestations in Douglas county Oregon are highly competitive in commercial timberland with the canopies of individual broom plants reaching almost 20 feet across. Control efforts must be long-term and sustained.

Biological controls: There are no biological control agents available for this plant.

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www.oregon.gov/ODA/programs/Weeds/Pages/Default.aspx

Photos by Ken French and Glenn Miller, ODA