

BROOMBUSTERS INVASIVE PLANT SOCIETY

2019 Delegation by Joanne Sales, Director of Broombusters.

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BACKGROUND. Volunteers of Nanaimo cut broom for the first time in the city in 2008. In the past 10 years, volunteers have cleared numerous parks and roads of broom.

Broombusters was started in Qualicum Beach in 2006. Other cities adopting the model - Parksville, Qualicum Beach, Lantzville, Port Alberni, Courtenay, Cumberland, Comox, Campbell River, Powell River, Gabriola Island, and other adjacent islands and districts. Broombusters is also supported by MOTI.

WHY CUT SCOTCH BROOM? Broom is an aggressive alien non-native invasive plant. It does great damage to the ecosystem, crowds out native plants, takes over farms, pastures and meadows and prevents forest regrowth. It's highly flammable and toxic to animals and the soil. It spreads like wildfire. The 18,000 seeds from a single plant can last in the soil for over 30 years. Broom seriously harms forestry, farming, tourism, our ecosystem and our health. This plant threatens farm and forest land worldwide.

FIRE HAZARD: A RDN director told us that the presence of broom made fighting the Nanaimo Lakes fire of summer 2018 more difficult. The Fire Chief of Powell River, Terry Peters, started a chapter of Broombusters in Powell River because of his alarm about the fire dangers. He says, "Scotch Broom is a volatile flash fuel - particularly with the mature plants. The presence of Scotch broom will increase a wildfire's fuel load and escalate the fire's intensity, compromising fire situations and making them more difficult to fight."

WHAT MAKES BROOMBUSTERS UNIQUE & EFFECTIVE?

Broombusters is an umbrella non-profit society. Our goal is to support the efforts of local residents, educating volunteers, providing signs, tools, and handouts, and helping with such work as website, presentations, and media. Volunteers are then free to just cut broom. All ages. It's a community building endeavor!

Broombusters "**Cut Broom in Bloom.**" It works. The majority of mature broom plants die when cut in bloom, at ground level, when the plant's energy is above ground in the flowers, followed by the summer's dry heat. (Pulling, mowing and using poison do not work.)

We are asking Nanaimo council for two things:

The Nanaimo Parks department (especially Deb Beck) has been outstanding; we collaborate with Parks on a few events each year. The Parks department has funding to remove broom cut in parks; however, each year there is stress about removing broom cut by volunteers on Nanaimo roads. We would request additional funding to remove cut broom from roads. The most cost-effective method used by some other regions is to hire a *small* chipping service. (Possibly a cost of \$800-1000/ year.)

We would also like to ask council for permission to post 6 signs for 4 weeks, to inform and invite other residents to join in the efforts of removing broom in Nanaimo. Our website has very useful information about Broombusters and broom removal.

Broombusters would like to **thank** Nanaimo council for its support since 2008!

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