

BROOMBUSTERS INVASIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Scotch Broom – an Alien Invasive Plant



Takes over anywhere in the sun. Leads to dramatic **loss of biodiversity**. **Toxic** to grazing animals. Prevents forest regrowth. Dominates and degrades farmland & park land, etc.

THE BAD NEWS LIST CONTINUES...



People are concerned!

In 2024, 600 volunteers cut broom
for over 6000 hours.

With support of 17 Local governments.



70 new volunteers signed up for Broombusters *in January.*

WHY?... The LA Fires



Buffelgrass burning.

Very Concerned about Wildfire

There is an increase of wildfires globally.

The primary culprit is **CLIMATE CHANGE**.

But grasses, shrubs, and trees that humans have introduced to new ecosystems are increasing wildfire frequency and intensity.

- Hawaii. Fire in Lahaina, 2023. Killed 101 people.
Fire attributed to invasive Buffelgrass and Guinea grass.

- Chile, Fire Feb 2024. Killed 134 people.
Fire attributed to non-native plantings.

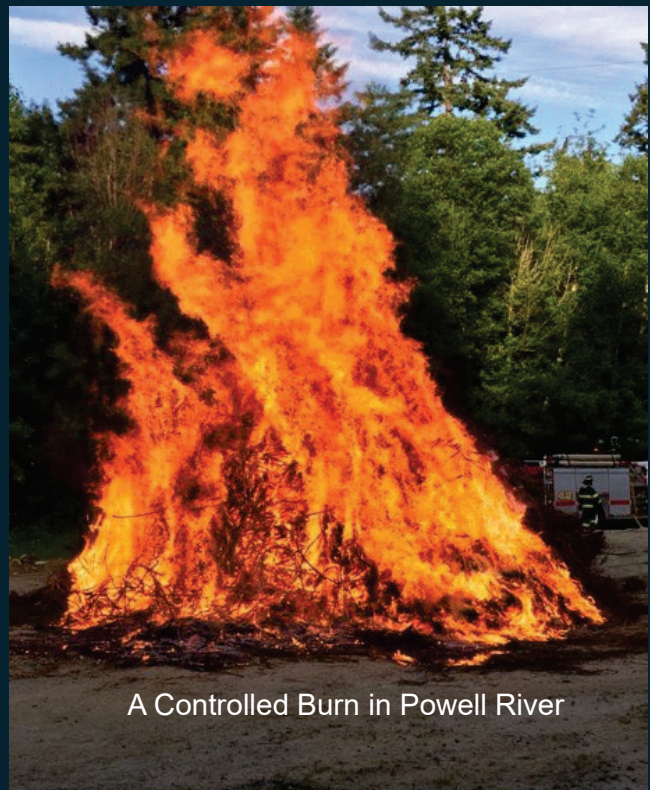
On Vancouver Island, our flammable invasive alien species is Scotch broom.

"Scotch Broom
is a **volatile flash fuel..**

It will increase a wildfire's fuel load
escalate the fire's intensity
compromise fire situations
make fires more difficult to fight."

Why is broom so dangerous?
Using terminology of firefighters

- Fuel Load
- Ladder Fuel
- Continuity
- Urban Interface Fires
- Ignition Sources



A Controlled Burn in Powell River

FireSmart lists Broom as one 13 HIGHEST RISK Flammable plants

Fire Hazard Plants

| Common Name | Scientific Name | Risk Level | Leaf Type |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Arborvitae (Cedar) | Thuja spp. | Highest Risk | C |
| Broom | Genista spp. | Highest Risk | B |
| Cedrus | Cedar spp. | Highest Risk | C |
| Douglas Fir | Pseudotsuga menziesii | Highest Risk | C |
| Firs | Abies spp. | Highest Risk | C |
| Fountain Grass | Pennisetum spp. | Highest Risk | |
| Holly | Ilex spp. | Highest Risk | B |
| Juniper | Juniperus spp. | Highest Risk | C |
| Pampas Grass | Cortaderia selloana | Highest Risk | |
| Pine | Pinus spp. | Highest Risk | C |
| Ponderosa Pine | Pinus ponderosa | Higher Risk | C |
| Spruce | Picea spp. | Highest Risk | C |
| Larch | Larix spp. | High Risk | D |
| Yew | Taxus spp. | Highest Risk | C |



From FireSmart website

Scotch broom increases **FUEL LOAD**.

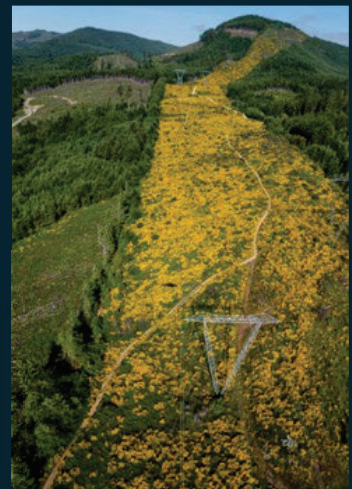
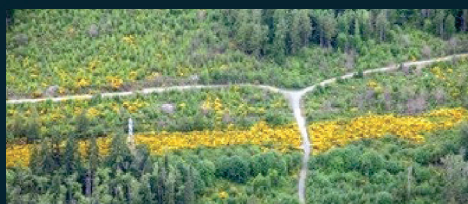
Broom forms impenetrable, dense thickets which create massive fuel load - and increase fire intensity.



Ladder fuels and high continuity of plants can increase fire risk.

Broom's dense continuous thickets create **FUEL CONTINUITY**

Broom thickets provide continuous fuel for a fire to **continue** to spread... On roads, train tracks, trails, powerlines... farms, parks, forest roads and native lands.



Broom in a LADDER FUEL

Ladder fuels carry fire VERTICALLY
from ground level into forest canopy, from lawns into houses.



"BROOM is a significant threat as a fire hazard for
Danger of Urban Interface Fires within our region."

Broom grows where we live.



**Where are our weaknesses
and what can we do to protect
our communities & island from wildfire?**

Two items over which Nanaimo has control.

Bylaws & development property.

Items over which Nanaimo has influence:

Fire Breaks

Fire works

Broom Disposal at Transfer stations

Re-Engagement with Nanaimo Corrections Centre.

Ignition Sources

Broom is called a

VOLATILE FLASH FUEL

because it catches fire so easily.

But a fire will not start without an
ignition source.



Eagle Creek Fire that burned 48,000 acres in the Columbia Gorge in Oregon in 2017, was started by a single **firecracker**.

The US Park Service estimates that 85% of **their** fires are human caused:

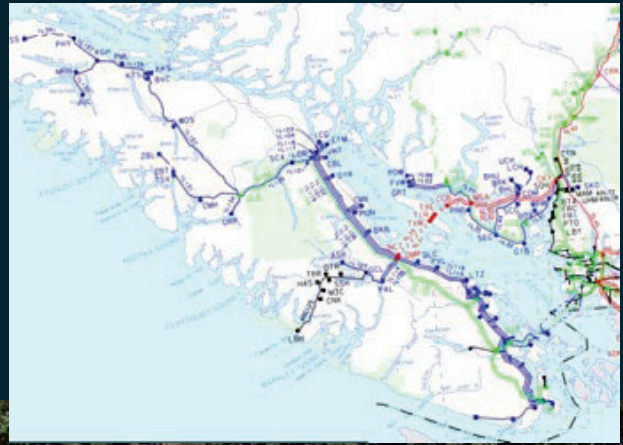
Campfires
Burning of debris
Malfunctioning machinery
Cigarettes
Fireworks
Arson



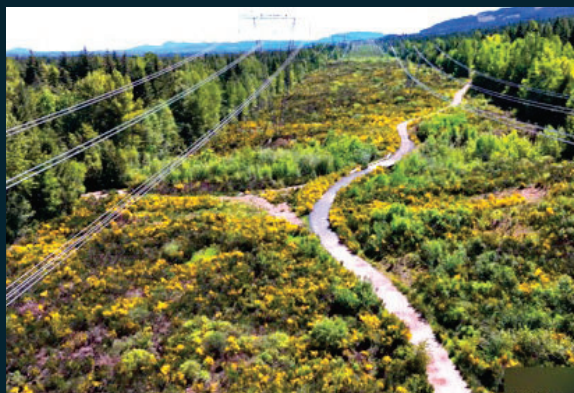
Lightning

BROOM ON POWERLINES

- Greatly increases **DANGER** that **FIRE could spread** across the island.
- Spreads seeds
- Blocks escape routes.
- Endangers Island's power infrastructure.



Fire Breaks Needed



In 2023, UBCM & AVICC passed the Resolution “Control of Scotch broom” recommending broom-free fire breaks along long stretches of broom.



Bylaws are an effective tool used to control Scotch broom. Bylaws in Nanaimo are limited in effectiveness by the requirement that only those immediately impacted can submit a bylaw complaint.

Everyone is impacted by the spread of broom.

Of special concern: broom spreads on development land that is cleared long before building.



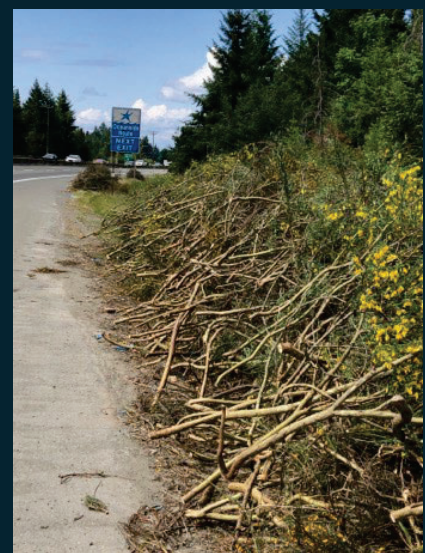
Disposal at Transfer Stations

Some regional districts now require that cut broom be put into plastic bags for disposal – which is both impossible and unnecessary. The result: many volunteers stop cutting broom.

Every plant is unique

Scotch broom does not resprout from pieces of branches or roots. Broom spreads only by seeds. CHIPPING or composting does not spread broom except when seed pods are on the branches – June-Sept.

Nanaimo Corrections Centre inmates previously cut and chipped broom. Could that happen again? It was SO helpful!



Thank you, Nanaimo, for your support since 2009. 16 Years!

Nanaimo Parks Department staff are the best.
Nanaimo is currently the only city that arranges and promotes Work Parties with Broombusters every year.

Residents appreciate Drop Zones sponsored by the city.

2024 INVASIVE PLANTS WORK PARTIES

Let's Pull Together &
"Free a Tree"!

MAY IS INVASIVE PLANT REMOVAL IN THE CITY OF NANAIMO!
Join like-minded individuals and tackle invasive plants during one of our work parties.
Your efforts really make a difference in improving our environment's health.

(Please pre-register for the work parties in advance through recreation.nanaimo.ca using the barcodes included below.)

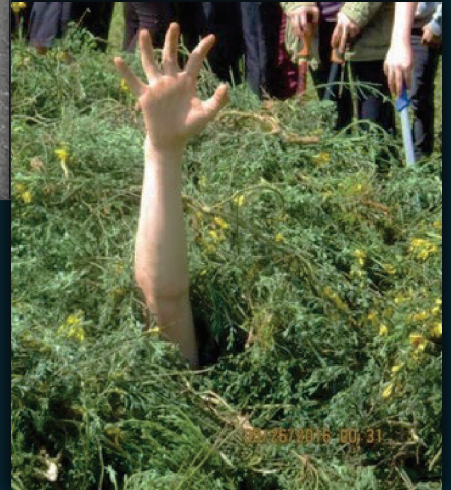
INVASIVE PLANTS WORK PARTIES

Nanaimo
Parkway



Thank you,
Nanaimo Volunteers!





We can't leave this problem to future generations.

Let's stop the spread of Broom.