

## **BROOMBUSTERS INVASIVE PLANT SOCIETY**

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# 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. Highly **Flammable**. Dominates and degrades farmland & parkland, etc. **THE BAD NEWS LIST CONTINUES...**





# People are concerned!

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

With the support of 17 Local governments.







110 new people volunteered in the first 5 weeks of the new year.

**WHY?... The LA Fires**



**Buffelgrass burning.**



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

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 intensity and rapid spread is attributed to invasive Buffelgrass.

- Chile, Feb 2024. Killed 134 people. Fire attributed to non-native plantings.
- LA Fires. Wet winters (2023-4) spurred unusual growth of flammable shrubs & brush.



“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.”

Let's look at why it's so dangerous  
using terminology of firefighters

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

Quote: Terry Peters, Retired Fire Chief Powell River



A Controlled Burn in Powell River



FireSmart lists Broom as one of 13 HIGHEST RISK flammable plants.

### Fire Hazard Plants

Common Name	Scientific Name	Risk Level	Leaf Type
Arborvitae (Cedar)	Thuja spp.	Highest Risk	C
Broom		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





# FUEL LOAD

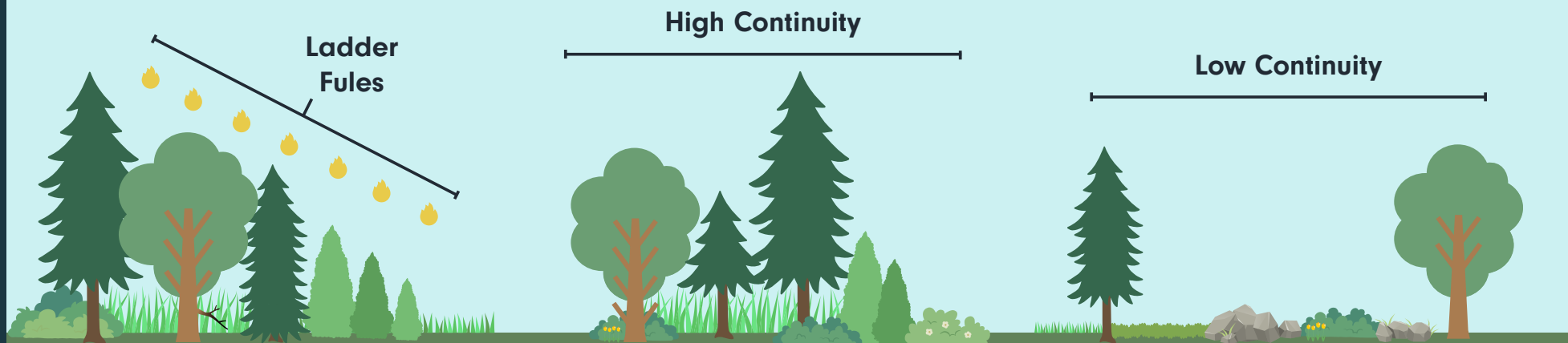
Broom's tall, impenetrable, dense thickets create massive fuel load - and increase fire intensity.







# Ladder Fuels and Continuity



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

FireSmart, Intelli-feu and other associated Marks are trademarks of the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre.

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



# FUEL CONTINUITY

Broom's dense continuous thickets provide endless fuel for a fire to **continue** to spread

On roads, tracks, trails, powerlines, farms, parks, forest roads, beaches & native lands.





# Broom is a LADDER FUEL

Ladder fuels carry fire VERTICALLY from ground level into forest canopy, from lawns into houses. Broom can grow 9' tall.





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

Broom grows where we live.





# 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**.

Broom is so flammable because of high oil content and naturally occurring dry branches.

Campfires  
Burning of debris  
Malfunctioning machinery  
Cigarettes  
Fireworks  
Arson



Lightning

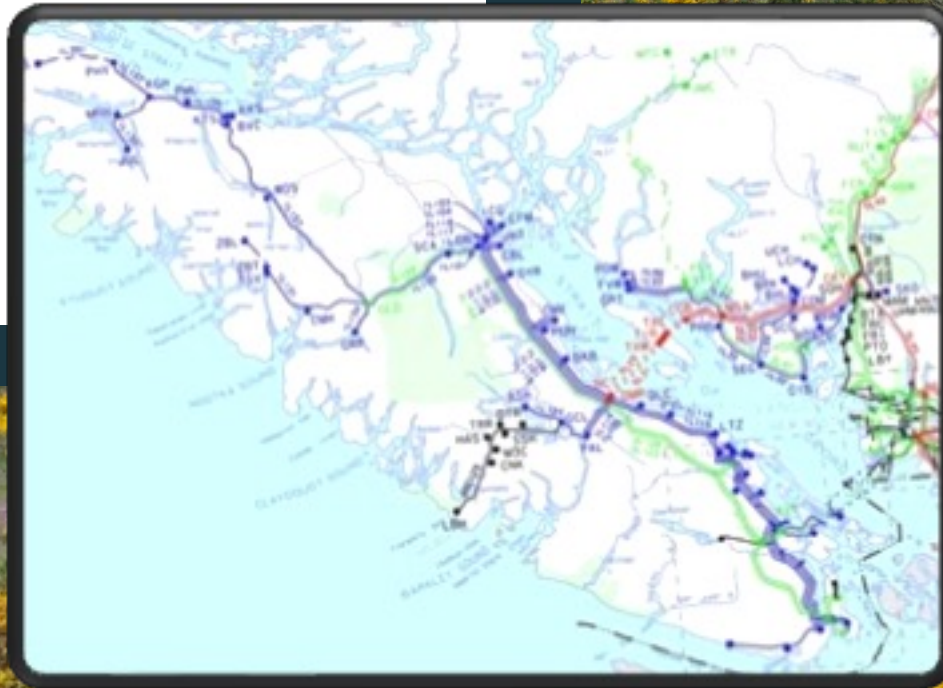
Eagle Creek  
photo KATU



## BROOM ON POWERLINES

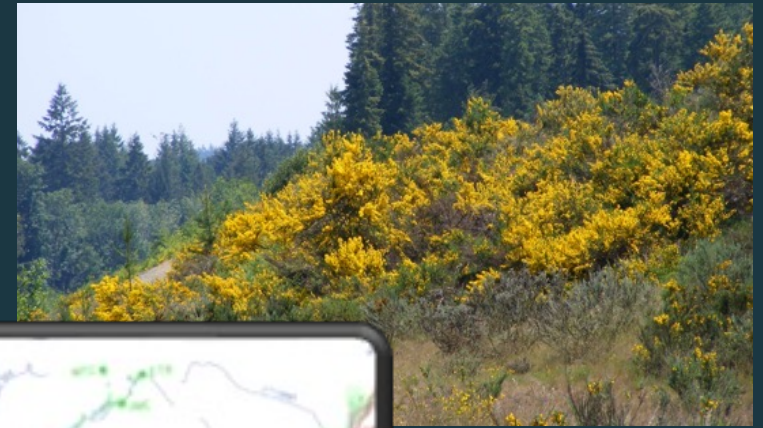
Greatly increases **DANGER**  
that **FIRE could spread** across the island.

Most of East Vancouver Island  
is connected by powerlines  
that are largely covered with  
flammable broom.



Broom on powerlines also

- Spreads seeds
- Blocks escape routes.
- Endangers power infrastructure.





In 2023, UBCM and AVICC (Union of BC Municipalities and Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Communities) passed the Resolution “Control of Scotch broom” recommending broom-free fire breaks along long stretches of broom.





# When Private Forests are “Cleared for Development”

Scotch broom can quickly take over.



Errington: Spring Hill Rd

How to prevent:

- Bylaws on municipal and regional levels
- Tree Protection bylaws
- Delay clearing permits until building permits are granted and construction ready to begin.

**BROOM FORESTS** are an ecological tragedy we could prevent.



# BROOM FORESTS

Between 2020-2024, 80 acres of forest were clearcut and broom took over. Fortunately, in 2025, new owners are clearing the broom. It can be done.



Between 2020 & 2024.  
The broom 5-6' tall in 4 years.



Errington - Alberni Hwy Hwy 19

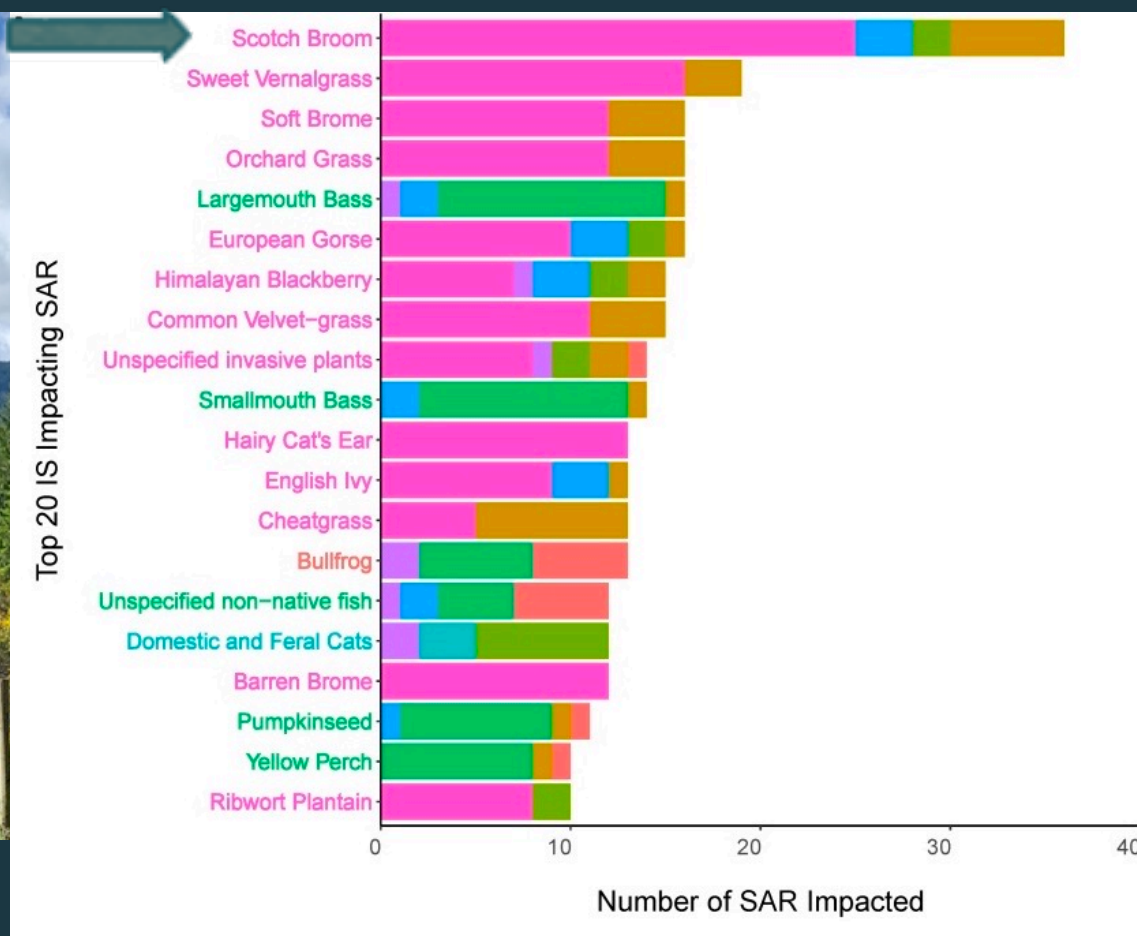


# Broom is the Worst Offender Of Biodiversity in BC

“Scotch Broom is the invasive species causing the greatest harm to Species at Risk in BC”



According to a new assessment report for Invasive Species Council of BC. 2021





# What do Broombusters do?

## Cut Broom in Bloom

April – End of May

Everyone is invited  
Community Cuts near You.

All tools provided.

Cut at ground level.

We stay in touch by email.





## Cut Broom in Bloom

*Our Technique*  
**Cut at ground level  
in bloom  
with loppers**

Find the single stalk – cut it!  
Leave no stem above ground.



What about giant broom? Difficult ones?  
Why not mow or pull? Check the website.

[www.broombusters.org](http://www.broombusters.org)

If cut high, the plant comes back.





**Thank you  
Broombuster volunteers!**





## Why volunteer?

**You can help to Preserve the Beauty & Health of Your Community.**

It's good work.

Community Building. Meet new people.

We can make a real difference.

Broombusting is FUN!

**THINK GLOBALLY. ACT LOCALLY.**





**How to volunteer:**  
Contact Broombusters  
[www.broombusters.org](http://www.broombusters.org)

## Active Groups

Parksville/Qualicum area  
Nanaimo/Lantzville  
Comox Valley  
Ladysmith / Sooke  
Powell River / Coquitlam  
Alberni Valley/ CVRD  
and many more  
communities & islands.  
Thinking of a new location?

[info@broombusters.org](mailto:info@broombusters.org)







A Wholehearted THANK YOU to our supporters

BC Gaming Board, MOTT & ALL 17 Municipalities & Regional Districts

Special thanks to Qualicum Beach, Nanaimo, RDN, ACRD, CVRD, CUPE FireSmart, Local News Services, Tree Services, generous donors, and you.





**We face an impossible task...  
BUT WE CAN DO IT!**



Farms

Powerlines



Highways

Trails







We can't leave this problem to future generations.

*Now is the time to*  
**Stop the Spread of Broom**