

WeedWise tips to target gorse

⊙ *Know your invader.* Familiarize yourself with gorse and learn how to identify and effectively manage this species.

⊙ *Inspect your property.* Keep an eye on your property for gorse, particularly around fencerows, heavily grazed pastures, logged areas, and burned-over areas.

⊙ *Control gorse before it becomes a problem.* Control when patches are small and manageable to reduce the time and expense needed to be successful.

⊙ *Know when to seek help.* Some weeds may require particular methods or techniques for control to be successful. Contact the **WeedWise** program for additional information about a particular weed or management practice.

⊙ *Don't spread gorse.* Properly dispose of pulled plants. Don't compost gorse once it has set seed.

⊙ *Be patient and diligent.* Understand that controlling and preventing the reinfestation of gorse is a long term process.



Known current and historic gorse locations in Clackamas County
The red dots depict all known gorse locations.



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Gorse
Ulex europaeus

Gorse



Management



CLACKAMAS COUNTY SOIL AND WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT
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Good dirt. Clean water.

Gorse



Above: A large Gorse infestation



Clockwise from upper left: Gorse seed pods in early summer, yellow flowers of gorse, Small gorse seedlings following a fire, dense spiny vegetation common



What is gorse?

Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) is an aggressive weed invading sites throughout our region. Native to central and western Europe, this spiny perennial commonly invades disturbed sites such as fence rows, gravel bars, heavily grazed pastures, and logged or burned sites.

What does it look like?

Adult gorse plants form dense and impenetrable thickets reaching heights up to 10 feet at maturity. The leaves of gorse develop as sharp spines and prickles. Gorse produces abundant pea-like yellow flowers in late winter and early spring that develop into densely hairy seed pods.

Why should I worry about gorse?

As a fast-growing noxious weed, gorse displaces native vegetation needed by wildlife for food and shelter. Sites invaded by gorse are almost completely impassable due to the dense growth and spiny vegetation. Mature gorse may contain 2 to 4% flammable oils, which can greatly increase the frequency and intensity of fires in an area.

How does gorse spread?

In our area, gorse is typically spread by humans or animals. New infestations of gorse seeds are typically the result of movement of contaminated soil or equipment.

Pull gorse when the ground is soft from December-April. OR Cut established plants before flowering

How do I control gorse on my property?

Gorse can be a very difficult plant to control due to the longevity of its seed, which can persist in the soil for up to 30 years. The long-lived nature of gorse seed means that any control effort is going to be a long term project.

Small patches of gorse can be controlled by pulling or digging plants. Small plants can be hand pulled, while larger plants can be removed using a weed wrench. Remove gorse plants in winter and spring when the ground is soft.

Large patches of gorse are best controlled using a combination of methods. Plants should be cut at ground level prior to flowering in early spring. Follow up with a targeted herbicide application in late summer through fall.

Choose herbicide products suitable for the site being treated. Products containing the active ingredients triclopyr and glyphosate have been shown to be effective in our area. Take care to thoroughly wet leaves with spray.

Before beginning an herbicide application, contact the **WeedWise** Program or consult the *Pacific Northwest Weed Management Handbook* (<http://pnwhandbooks.org/weed/>) for the most up-to-date herbicide recommendations.

Spray gorse with herbicides in late summer through early fall, from August-October



Samuel Leininger, Clackamas SWCD

REPORT GORSE!

Have you noticed invasive *gorse* in your area? Report your sightings to the District's **WeedWise** program, or submit them online at oregoninvasiveshotline.org.



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