

Genista - Up by the Roots!

There is a *lot* of Genista in the Carmel Views.

This non-native pesky invader - like all brush - is very persistent. If genista (aka Scotch Broom) is left to seed it can regenerate for several seasons. Best to pull out the plant (roots and all) when genista has just sprouted in Feb-Mar (1-12" tall plants are easy)... Removal is critical before genista shows it's signature lemon-yellow flowers and drops seeds (which can lay dormant for up to 6-7 years). This can become a nightmare for the home owner who's unaware, does not remove the whole plant or lets it go to full bloom - basically surrounding their home with a flammable, non-native weed. Plants in bloom should be removed and bagged to prevent further seed distribution. Mature plants (24-60") become "woody" in 2-3 seasons and can be 1-3" in diameter at their base and have deeper roots - up to 12-18". These may be easy to pull out in loose, damp soil early season... or more difficult later - in rocky aggregate or dry compacted dirt. Late season extraction may require tools (like the [Uprooter*](#), a pick-mattock, etc) to pull or dig out the roots.

The wrong thing to do is to "mow" or "cut" genista at ground level. This only temporarily curtails it's growth (it will be back next year twice as thick) and makes removal a more difficult and unenviable task. Ditto for chemical treatments which are effective plant killers (via leaf absorption) but don't kill subterranean seeds. Spraying poisons can affect other plants, insects and animals (humans & pets too) and contaminants can run off onto neighboring and community properties. Use carefully and with caution. Applying chemicals (like Round Up) assures you will soon have dead, dry and even more combustible genista - which will still need to be pulled out and disposed of properly.

In our coastal area the high cover percentage and low leaf moisture content of genista makes it highly undesirable, contributing to both fuel density and flammability and makes access by wild land firefighters more difficult. Genista Monspessulana is also listed on [Monterey County Weed Threats](#) (along with other Carmel Views invaders - Pampas Grass, Scotch Thistle & Taurian Thistle) which should be removed with equal priority. Let's not allow these alien invaders take over The Views.

Mature genista also harbor some very [undesirable characters](#) - Pacific Coast Ticks or Garrapatas (dermacetor occidentalis), Western Black Legged Ticks (ixodes pacificus) and others - who wait for the opportunity to "catch a ride" on your clothes (or your pet), then burrow into flesh and have themselves a meal. These pests pose a health risk and often cause pain and inflammation at the bite site - and if left untreated pose risk of infection. Wear long sleeved shirts and long pants and inspect self and companions after "work in the brush." Know "tick first aid" for both your family and pets.

For several good reasons - Genista's gotta go. Help yourself and your neighbors by eradicating this pesky and persistent weed from your properties, surrounding areas and along our roadways. If you hire help, do instruct workers to pull (not cut), bundle and bag (if bloomed) for pick up. If you get after it yourself - consider the benefits: fresh air, exercise, a little stress relief and some good karma.

Your Carmel Views neighbor,
Larry Arthur