

FIRE PREPAREDNESS UPDATE #11

from the CVCA Firewise Team

Genista Eradication Campaign Special Edition



Did you know that the yellow-flowering plant now blooming along our roadsides is serious fire hazard? It's a highly invasive weed called Genista (scientific name *Genista monspessulana*) – or “French Broom.” Because Genista is very flammable, allowing it to grow in your yard intensifies wildfire risks to your home and property and to our community.

Carmel Views is calling on YOU to help to eradicate Genista from our neighborhood.

It's easy! When you see Genista in your yard, just pull it out by the roots and put it into your green waste bin. It's that simple. Become a “Genista Warrior” today!

1) Learn How to Identify Genista (French Broom)

Genista is a green shrub with bright yellow flowers that ranges from a few inches to more than 8-feet high. Its leaves are less than an inch long and come in clusters of three. The flowers look like pea blossoms.

Watch this [YouTube Genista Video](#) made by our neighbor Maureen McEachen to learn how to identify Genista and distinguish it from other similar-looking shrubs.

Or see this handy [French Broom Identification Card](#) provided by the California Invasive Plant Council.

2) Eliminate Genista from Your Yard

While the ground is still damp from recent rains – seize the opportunity (literally!) to easily pull-out Genista. It will become much more difficult as things dry up and the ground hardens.

Hand pulling works well for small to medium sized plants. But for bigger or deeply rooted plants, a special tool called a “PullerBear” can help (watch this [YouTube PullerBear Video](#) to see how). To borrow a PullerBear from CVCA, contact the Board at cvcaboard@gmail.com.

Some homeowners may want to use chemical herbicides to control extensive or dense Genista infestations. Our neighbor Alexis Speidel has compiled these [Best Practices for Using Roundup](#) to assist community members with safe usage.

It’s important to remove all Genista plants that you see – large and small. And remember, Genista seed can stay dormant in the ground for years. So, make sure to routinely monitor your yard for new Genista seedlings and remove them promptly.

3) Still Not Convinced? Understand More about the Genista Threat

It’s hard to imagine how such an attractive plant can be so destructive. But Genista is one bad actor. It burns easily and intensely, contributing to the spread of wildfires and providing ladder fuels that enable fire to reach tree canopies. Genista produces prolific seed and grows quickly, allowing it to rapidly invade new areas and establish dense stands that crowd out native plants and biodiversity.

Don’t take our word for it. The Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner has identified Genista as a [weed threat to the County](#). The [California Invasive Plant Council](#) assigns French Broom its worst rating because of the level of ecological damage it causes. The Santa Lucia Conservancy considers Genista to be one of the Preserve’s ["top weeds of concern"](#) because of how it intensifies wildfire risks. Genista is also on the California Department of Food & Agriculture’s State Noxious Weed list. And French Broom has been identified by numerous California Counties and municipalities as a fire hazardous and prohibited plant that elevates wildfire risks – including [Marin](#) and [Santa Barbara](#).

4) Need More Help?

During April and May, a team of knowledgeable Carmel Views community members will be available to talk with you, upon request, about how to identify and remove Genista. Contact CarmelViewsFirewise@gmail.com if you would like to schedule a visit by one of our team members.

*Please email Liz Chornesky, the current Carmel Views Firewise Lead (CarmelViewsFirewise@gmail.com), and copy your message to the Board (cvcaboard@gmail.com), if you have any questions or comments about this or future **CVCA Fire Preparedness Updates**.*