



Community

WEDNESDAY, MAY 19, 2010 2:19 PM PDT

Anti-Scotch broom tool offered

Summer has nearly returned to the coast.

With the warmer temperatures and sun, however, comes Scotch broom.

The Umpqua Soil and Water Conservation District is offering residents a tool to combat the invasive plant.

It's called a weed wrench. The long metal handle is used to grip the spiky, deep green and yellow plants, then rip them from the ground.

Scotch broom often blanket hillsides, blocking sunlight and sapping nutrients from the soil shared by native species.

The plant is listed as a noxious weed on the Oregon Department of Agriculture's Web site. It is found abundantly in all Oregon counties west of the Cascade Range.

As of 2008, ODA estimated Scotch broom growing on timber lands costs that industry \$47 million each year.

Users can use the wrench to pull out the entire root of the Scotch broom. This ensures the plant won't grow back, according to a press release.

Spring is the best time to wrench Scotch broom from the soil, which is still soft, the release said.

The district is loaning wrenches for no cost, with a \$25 deposit. Deposits will be refunded with the return of the wrench.

Call (541) 662-2138, 541-662-1341 or visit the conservation district's offices at Reedsport Coffeehouse, 2285 Longwood Drive, to request a weed wrench.