

Volunteers needed to pull invasive weeds

By Jeff Duewel
of the Daily Courier

As a little girl on a ranch outside Eagle Point in the 1960s Amy Wilson remembers one Scotch broom plant. She pulled it.

When she returned from the Peace Corps in her 20s, it was a patch.

Now it's 1 or 2 acres.

"I'm going after it with the Kubota," she said.

Scotch broom, imported from Europe more than a century ago, infests more than 7 million acres in Oregon, or 6.6 times the size of Josephine County, according to the Oregon Department of Agriculture. It costs the state nearly \$50 million in lost timber production.

"Scotch broom is here in Josephine County, but we could still keep it at bay," said Wilson, coordinator for the Southwest Oregon Resource Conservation



JEFF DUEWEL/Daily Courier

Amy Wilson stands next to a tall Scotch broom plant near Grants Pass. Scotch broom is one of a number of invasive species growing around the state.

Get involved

- **WHAT:** Weed pulling event
- **WHERE:** Whitehorse Park
- **WHEN:** 9 a.m. to noon, Saturday
- **HOT TOPIC:** Experts will discuss invasive weeds, and join volunteers in pulling weeds. Picnic lunch, free shirts, door prizes to follow.

and Development Council. "It hasn't been here that long. If you go north into Douglas County — well, it really likes Douglas County."

Volunteers are requested to help pull Scotch broom and many other invasive weeds on Saturday at Whitehorse Park from 9 a.m. to noon.

The same event last year at Tom Pearce Park drew 26 people who removed dozens of bags full of weeds, Wilson said.

Wilson said at least six experts will also be available to teach people about different weeds, and how to keep them under control.

"Everybody needs to be pulling them when they see them," Wilson said. "What happens on private land affects neighbors and the public."

Scotch broom, which blooms bright yellow in spring, is an evergreen shrub 3 to 10 feet tall, with many slender, straight branches with small leaves.

"If a landowner has their place covered in Scotch broom, they need to get on it," Wilson said.

The plant produces thousands of seeds. It is also oily and quite flammable.

Mowing, pulling and using chemicals can all work, but require vigilance, Wilson said.

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