

Goat's rue

Galega officinalis

Family

Fabaceae (pea)

Also known as

French lilac, Italian fitch

Where is it originally from?

Middle East

What does it look like?

Woody, upright herbaceous perennial (<2m tall). Small, oval, bright green leaflets are arranged in 4-9 pairs along stems. Soft and spindly when young, but grows into dense clumps with tall stems that die back during autumn. Many-flowered clusters (<30 cm long) of small pea-like purplish-blue to deep pink to white-purplish flowers (Dec-May) are followed by cylindrical seedpods with parallel veins.

Why is it weedy?

Spreads rapidly, establishes quickly, and can tolerate a wide range of conditions.

How does it spread?

Each plant can produce thousands of long lived seeds. Seeds are dispersed via pod burst or from pods floating on waterways. Can also grow from stem fragments. Human spread can be via the movement of contaminated gravel.

What damage does it do?

Forms tough clumps and spreads rapidly, taking over large areas. Clumps form a large, woody rootstock that can survive several years, sending up new shoots each season. Can be poisonous to stock.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?

Riverbeds, swampland, pastures, roadsides, and wasteland.

What can I do to get rid of it?

1. Physical removal (all year round) - Hand pull seedlings or dig out entire plant. Leave on site to rot down.
2. Foliar spray - Spot spray with knapsack. Apply picloram/triclopyr herbicide (picloram 100g/l and triclopyr 300g/l active ingredient) at a rate of 6ml/L to thoroughly wet all parts of plant. Note: This herbicide is 'grass friendly' but overspray will kill other (desirable) broadleaf plants and picloram has residual activity in the soil which may leach through soil and kill other plants. Do not use under and around other (desirable) broadleaf plants.

CAUTION: When using any herbicide or pesticide, PLEASE READ THE LABEL THOROUGHLY to ensure that all instructions and directions for the purchase, use and storage of the product, are followed and adhered to. Do not use over or near water bodies or wetlands and use only as directed on label.



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Photo: Trevor James



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