

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.



www.weedbusters.org.nz



Photo: Carolyn Lewis



Photo: Trevor James



Photo: Carolyn Lewis