

Orobanche minor

Recognize the problem

Family: Orobanchaceae (broomrape family).

Common names: broom rape, common broomrape, lesser broomrape.

Annual, herbaceous, succulent, parasitic plants that lack chlorophyll; 30-50 cm tall but can exceed 100 cm (especially in Ethiopia); stems are un-branched, yellowish-brown, often tinged with purple. A root parasite seen only on host roots.

Leaves: Leaves are represented by alternate brown scales, ovate to lanceolate, gradually tapering to a point (acuminate), 6-20 mm long.

Flowers: The inflorescence is an elongated spike, 10-30 cm long occupying about half the mature stem; colour mainly pale whitish but with varying amounts of purple concentrated along the veins.

Fruits: Seed capsules are 7-10 mm long, containing several hundred minute seeds.

Seeds: Approx. 0.3 mm long; require host exudates in the soil for germination.

Flowering shoot. (Photo by Photo by Chris Parker/Bristol, UK)



Orobanche minor parasitizing a tobacco plant. (Photo by Chris Parker/Bristol, UK)



Background

Origin: Southern Europe.

Introduction: Accidental as a contaminant.

Habitat: Grows on a wide range of soil types in temperate and highland tropical areas; uncommon in naturally wet habitats.

Spread: Seeds spread by wind, surface water, animals, machinery, vehicles and as a contaminant of soil or crop seed.

Invades: Parasitizes numerous crop species in a wide range of plant families; also associated with disturbed areas, roadsides and waste places.

Impacts: The weed negatively affects agricultural crops. It is dependent on its host for sugars, minerals and water, causing severe direct damage. Host seedlings can be killed and infection at later stages affects host development, flowering and fruiting by causing chlorosis or inhibiting growth. In many cases the number of host flowers is reduced, pollinated flowers are shed or fruits drop before ripening due to broom rape infection. Fruits of affected crops also do not grow to their optimal size. The weed has no impact on the environment or on biodiversity.

Scientific name(s) > *Orobanche minor*

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: All Countries



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