



AB 402 – Broomrape Program

SUMMARY

Broomrape is a noxious weed new to California, found in tomato fields in Yolo County. California’s agricultural industry urgently needs to conduct research into control methods for this invasive species before it gets established. Assembly Bill 402 will establish an expert Broomrape board to provide recommendations and guidance to be able to mitigate this weed.

BACKGROUND

Broomrape (genus *Orobanche*) is a genus of about 150 species of parasitic annual or perennial herbs (family *Orobanchaceae*). Broomrapes produce little or no chlorophyll; instead, they draw nourishment from the roots of other plants by means of small suckers called haustoria. Most species are primarily subterranean and appear aboveground only to reproduce. The flowers are irregularly shaped and produce single-chambered capsules that contain numerous minute seeds. The plants have scales in place of leaves and may be yellowish, brownish, purplish, or white in color.

Branched broomrape can parasitize a wide range of crops from several plant families such as pasture legumes, solanaceous vegetables, pulses, cucurbits and brassicas. Host plants include canola, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, hemp, lettuce, sunflower, linseed, spinach, chickpeas, beans, lentils, flax, burr medic, clovers, rockmelon, capsicums, eggplant, potatoes, tomatoes and onions.

Broomrapes can cause significant yield losses -- for example, tomato crops can lose up to 40 percent of their yield. Some crops, such as cabbages and celery, may yield the same amount, but the plants will be yellow and unappealing to consumers. The weed's presence could result in partial or total crop losses and the possible loss of potential to produce some crops in heavily-affected areas.

Broomrape can also cause loss of export markets interstate and overseas, and increases in management and control costs. Branched broomrape will also parasitize a range of weeds, enabling it to reproduce even when crops are not present.

THIS BILL

AB 402 will:

- Establish the Broomrape Program Board, an **industry-funded** program at the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA).
- Be composed of 12 members, with at least 3 representing each of the following districts:
 - District 1: The Counties of Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Placer, Solano, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba.
 - District 2: The Counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, Sacramento, San Benito, San Joaquin, Santa Clara, and Stanislaus
 - District 3: The Counties of Fresno, Madera, Merced, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Santa Cruz.
 - District 4: The Counties of Imperial, Kern, Kings, Riverside and Tulare, and that portion of the County of Los Angeles lying north of the San Gabriel Mountains.
- Require the board to provide recommendations and guidance to the secretary of CDFA.
- Sunset in 2028.

SUPPORT

California Tomato Growers Association (sponsor)
California Agricultural Commissioners and Sealers Association
Solano County Board of Supervisors

CONTACT

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