

Large Butcher’s Broom

GENERAL

- Origin : sub-Mediterranean, Mediterranean, sub-tropical
- Humidity : semi-humid, very humid
- Propagation : sowing and pricking out, division
- Maintenance : low

CONDITIONS

- Urban climate : vulnerable
- Dessication : vulnerable
- Stagnant water : vulnerable
- Irrigation : medium
- Salinity/ppm : moderate (1800 ppm)
- Hardiness : -15°C

SHAPE

- Type : shrub
- Height : 0.3 m-0.6 m
- Spread : 0.4 m-0.6 m
- Foliage : evergreen

FLOWER

- Colour : pale green
- Size : 0.5 cm
- Period : April - May

FRUIT

- Type of fruit : berry
- Fruit size : 1 cm

This evergreen bush may be found in scrub, woodlands and old forests growing to about 60 cm in height. A plant that looks the same all year round might seem unadventurous, but its benefits are underestimated. Butcher’s Broom is maintenance-free and tolerates drought, deep shade, salinity and neglect. It is frost hardy to -15°C without damage. Soils may be poor and range from acid to alkaline. In full sun, the foliage appears pale green, while turning darker the less light is available. It is an ideal shrub for growing vigorously beneath established trees where it has to contend with drought and to compete with thirsty roots. Thanks to its robustness, Butcher’s Broom is a popular plant for containers exposed to adverse conditions. If old stems are cut to the ground in early spring, fresh new shoots appear with light green cladodes. They are also known as phylloclades, and are actually flattened stems that resemble leaves. The true foliage consists of degenerated leaflets around the flowers. The plant’s white inflorescences appear in spring and are interesting but not striking, followed by scarlet berries in the centre of the cladodes of female plants. They are poisonous if eaten, as are the other parts of this shrub. The stems are often used as long-lasting elements in flower arrangements. Division is an easy method for propagating these bushes, but stratified seeds may also be sown. *Ruscus hypophyllum* looks similar to *R. hypoglossum*, but its stems are more arching and the cladodes are larger.

