



Washington
State Department of
Agriculture

PEST ALERT

SUNFLOWER BROOMRAPE

Scientific name: Orobanche cumana

Sunflower broomrape (*Orobanche cumana*) is a highly invasive, parasitic weed of the sunflower (Asteracea) family. It is unable to photosynthesize and relies entirely on the host plant. Sunflower broomrape causes significant declines in the health and productivity of plants in the sunflower family and could be devastating to sunflower production. The plants also produce hundreds of thousands of seeds which remain viable in the soil for decades.

What to look for:

- Sudden wilting or yellowing in sunflower plants
- Strange pale yellow to purple flowering stems near the base of sunflowers. Immature flower stalks can look similar to asparagus.
- Unexplained stunting or plant death

If you see sunflower broomrape:

- DO NOT DISTURB IT. This can unintentionally spread seed.
- Take photos and report suspected sightings to WSDA immediately and await further instruction.
- Include your name, the location of the sighting, date of sighting, and photos with your report.

For more information or to report:

- pest@agr.wa.gov
- (800) 443-6684
- agr.wa.gov/sunflowerpest

