

Orobanche ramosa

Recognize the problem

Family: Orobanchaceae (broomrape family).

Common names: Branched broomrape, hemp broomrape

Amharic: Yemedet kitenge; **Oromifa:** Delantuba.

Branched broomrape is an upright parasitic plant with no green coloured tissue (10-30 cm tall). The base of the stem, below ground, is normally swollen and tuberous. It is 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 blue, white or purple.

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

Seeds: 0.2-0.4 mm long; require host root exudates in the soil for germination. Seeds may remain viable in the soil for many, possibly more than ten years.

Background

Origin: Southern Europe, parts of Eastern Africa and Asia Minor.

Introduction: As a contaminant, possibly of seeds, soil and packaging.

Habitat: Warm temperate to tropical regions; requires high temperatures for optimum germination and growth.

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

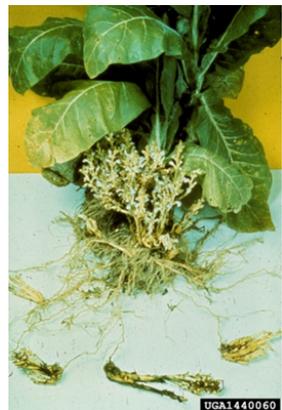
Invades: Parasitizes numerous crop species in a wide range of plant families; serious weed of pulses, oilseed and vegetable crops; associated also with disturbed areas, roadsides and waste places.

Impacts: The crops most seriously affected by branched broomrape are tomato, aubergine and tobacco, with localized problems in many other crops, especially *Brassica* spp. The roots of *O. ramosa*, which attach to the crop roots, draw nutrients and water from its host, thereby reducing crop growth and yield. Total crop failure can occur under severe infestation. Yield losses of 80-100% have been reported for tomato and potato crops. Reduced yields in tomato, reported from various countries, also threaten the viability of some tomato juice factories. Losses in tobacco yield have been estimated at about 30%, with further economic damage caused by negative effects on tobacco quality. Infestations can have especially serious consequences, as it may prove uneconomic to continue growing these crops (and many others) in affected regions for a very long period to come.

Branched broomrape. (Photo by © O.P. Sharma, Bugwood.org)



Branched broomrape on tobacco. (Photo by © R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company Slide Set, R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, Bugwood.org)



Scientific name(s) > **Orobanche ramosa**

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: All Countries



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