

## WEED ALERT

### WATCH OUT FOR BRANCHED BROOMRAPE!

A serious worldwide crop weed has been found in South Australia. Branched Broomrape (*Orobanche ramosa*) is a major weed of pulses, oilseeds and vegetable crops - if it established, for example, on canola, it could lead to severe losses. Its effect on native species is unknown.

All Broomrapes are parasites on the roots of host plants, and have no chlorophyll. They produce hundreds of thousands of tiny seeds. Branched Broomrape is fairly small, up to 30 cm high, with pale blueish flowers. As the name suggests, its stem *branches*,



Branched Broomrape

which the stem of the Common Broomrape (*O. minor*) never does. The latter is common on capeweed and other broad-leaved weeds on roadsides, in gardens and in crop and pasture paddocks. Despite its size (it can grow to 1 m tall) it is not an economic problem.

If you see a suspect **BRANCHED broomrape** plant, collect it and a portion of its host, mark the site where you found it, and contact AGWEST Weed Science Branch. A colour leaflet to help with identification can be obtained from AGWEST.