



Ficaria verna

WA – Class B Noxious Weed, Prohibited Plant List

OR – Class B Noxious Weed

Lesser Celandine

Fig Buttercup, Pilewort, Figroot Buttercup, Figwort, Bulbous Buttercup, Small Crowfoot

Family: Ranunculaceae

Origins: Native to Asia, Europe, and Northern Africa. It was first documented in the United States in 1867 in Pennsylvania.

Range: Found throughout the United States. In Washington and Oregon, infestations are more dense west of the Cascades.

Habitat: Commonly grows in moist, shaded woodlands, wetlands, streambanks, riverbanks, lawns, landscaped areas, and roadsides. Lesser Celandine prefers shaded areas but can grow in full sun if adequate moisture is present.



Impact: Lesser Celandine emerges before most other spring forbs, giving it a competitive advantage over native understory plant communities. It reproduces by seed, through movement of its tuberous roots, and by bulbils on its stem. Tubers and bulbils are easily dislodged and spread by mowing, moving soil and plant parts, and flooding.

Description: Lesser Celandine is a perennial, highly variable, herbaceous plant in the buttercup family. Plants are hairless and grow up to 12 inches tall in a mounded rosette with basal and stem leaves. Oblong triangular to heart-shaped leaves are dark green on top and lighter colored on the bottom. Leaf edges are smooth with rounded teeth, leading to a rounded tip. Basal leaves have longer petioles than stem leaves.

Solitary, one inch wide flowers bloom at stem tips that rise above the leaves. Cup-shaped flowers with 7 to 13 petals are usually yellow but may vary in color depending on the cultivar. Pale-colored bulbils are produced at the leaf axils, and are not apparent until late in the flowering period. When in bloom, large infestations appear as a green carpet with yellow dots spreading across the forest floor. Leaves appear in winter, and flowers bloom in early spring (March to April); by summer, the ground is bare. Underground tubers are club-shaped.

Common Look-Alikes: Native Yellow Marsh Marigold, Buttercup, Creeping Charlie.

** All parts of the plant are poisonous to humans and livestock. The toxins are unstable, of low toxicity, and easily destroyed by heat or by drying. Fresh leaves contain protoanemonin, which can cause sickness in livestock but rarely causes death. The sap can irritate the skin.*



Lesser celandine in February (left), April (center), and July (right)

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Integrated Pest Management - Control Methods

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) combines various methods such as mechanical, cultural, biological, and chemical controls to manage pests. IPM offers the possibility of improving the efficiency of pest control while reducing its negative environmental impacts. For more information, see the Cowlitz County Noxious Weed's IPM Resources & Strategy Guide or contact your local Noxious Weed Control Board to develop a customized IPM plan.

Non-Herbicide Control

Mechanical (pulling, cutting, digging, etc.)	Small infestations can be controlled by hand digging, making sure to remove all plant parts. Any remaining roots or bulbils can sprout into new plants. Bag and dispose of plant parts, do not compost. Mowing is not recommended for control as it may spread bulbils and seeds, encouraging growth.
Cultural	Sheet mulching with wood chips can effectively smother the plants, but only if the layer is at least six inches deep.
Biological	Biological agents are currently not available for Lesser Celandine in Washington State.

Herbicide Control: Foliar Broadcast Treatment

Glyphosate (Rodeo, Killzall, Kleenup, Roundup)	Timing: Apply in late winter to early spring; Lesser Celandine goes dormant by late spring. Remarks: Spray complete uniform coverage, but not to the point of runoff; dust on plants may reduce effectiveness; Glyphosate is nonselective, it injures or kills any vegetation it contacts; refer to the label for use in aquatic areas.
Metsulfuron (Escort, MSM)	Timing: Apply in early spring; Lesser Celandine goes dormant by late spring. Remarks: Do not allow spray to drift to sensitive crops; apply only to pasture, rangeland, and non-crop sites; application sites differ between products; for best results, use a surfactant; do not apply near water.
Imazapyr (Habitat)	Timing: Apply in early spring; Lesser Celandine goes dormant by late spring. Remarks: Spray complete uniform coverage, but not to the point of runoff; dust on plants may reduce effectiveness; do not apply near water; may be harmful to some tree species; refer to the label for use in aquatic areas.

Cowlitz County Noxious Weed Control Board does not endorse any product or brand name. Brand names are listed as an example only. Other commercial products may contain the listed active chemical for herbicide control. Always read and follow the safety protocols and rate recommendations on the herbicide label. **The Label is The Law.**

This control sheet includes excerpts from the Written Findings of the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board (WSNWCB), nwcb.wa.gov. Herbicide information from the PNW Weed Management Handbook (ISBN 978-1-931979-22-1) and product labels.