

Mason County Noxious Weed Control

Buttercup Family

Lesser Celandine

Ficaria verna

Identification Tips

- Flowers are bright yellow with 7 to 13 petals and many stamens.
- Flowers have 3 (sometimes 4) green sepals.
- Plants have basal and stem leaves that are smooth, medium to dark green, and oblong to heart shaped.
- Grows to about 1 foot tall.
- Cultivated varieties may have different colored flowers or leaves.



Regulated Class B Noxious Weed: Control Required

Biology

- Herbaceous perennial.
- Blooms March to April.
- Can be insect or self pollinated.
- Produces bulblets at leaf axils after flowering.
- Reproduces by seed, bulblets or underground tubers.
- Ephemeral, emerges and dies back quickly by June.

Impacts

- **All parts of plant are toxic to humans and livestock.**
- Sap causes skin irritation for some people.
- Emerges early in season before most native plants, forming monocultures in some areas.
- Outcompetes native vegetation.
- Invades moist, shaded woodlands, lawns, stream banks and riparian areas.
- Some research suggests allelopathy and ability to alter soil chemistry.

Distribution

- Native to Eurasia and North Africa.
- Introduced as a garden ornamental.
- Distribution in Washington is limited, primarily found west of Cascades.
- Found in shaded areas with moist soil.
- Also documented growing in drier sites.



Laurel Baldwin, Whatcom County NWCB
Lesser celandine infestation in Whatcom County

QUESTIONS? Contact Mason County Noxious Weed Control at:

(360) 427-9670 ext. 592 or patriciag@co.mason.wa.us

<https://extension.wsu.edu/mason/natural-resources/noxious-weed-program/>

What You Can Do

Control of lesser celandine is a legal requirement in Mason County. It is not yet widespread in the county. Help stop the spread of this toxic noxious weed. Check your yard, parks, and the roadsides in your area during early spring for flowering plants. By slowing the spread and eliminating existing plants, we can keep this plant from harming animals and humans. Contact the Mason County Noxious Weed Control Board if you see lesser celandine around Mason County.

Control Methods

For the best results, control methods should be carried out over several years. Survey your yard and neighboring properties for lesser celandine. Initiate control or report infestations when found. Choose control methods that are best suited to your site. **Wear gloves when handling lesser celandine to avoid skin irritation.** After removal, sites must be monitored for several years for new plants. **Contact Mason County Noxious Weed Control for more information.**

Prevention

It is illegal to transport or sell lesser celandine. **Do not dump yard debris or soil containing lesser celandine anywhere.** New infestations can start from improperly disposed of yard waste. Instead, bag plant material and place in household garbage. It is recommended that cleared areas be reseeded to add competition. Continue to monitor area after control to ensure site is not being reinfested.

Manual Control

Caution: Due to the irritating toxins found in lesser celandine, wearing gloves and long-sleeves is recommended.

Small sites can be controlled by hand pulling or digging. Be sure to remove all parts of the plant including tubers and bulbils, as they will resprout into new plants. Bag and dispose of all plant material in the trash. **Do not compost lesser celandine.** Manual control is only effective for small infestations.



Lesser celandine grows from underground tubers. Remove all plant material to prevent reinfestation.

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Could be confused with other members of the Buttercup Family.



Invasive creeping buttercup has yellow flowers with 5 petals and many stamens. Leaves are divided into three segments and have light blotching. Stems and leaves have hairs.



Native marsh marigold has shiny yellow flowers with 5 petals and many stamens. Leaves are glossy, green, oval-heart shaped with slit or "sinus". Stems are hollow.

Mechanical

Mowing and cutting are not effective methods for control of lesser celandine, and can potentially increase spread of plant. Whatcom County noted that mowing may have increased lesser celandine sites in the county. Mulching can work to smother lesser celandine, and must be at least 6 inches deep.

Chemical

Choose a formulation that is appropriate for your site. Follow the label exactly as written and use only at rate prescribed. Do not apply herbicide over or near water bodies.

Chemical control is considered to be the most effective method for controlling large infestations. An herbicide containing glyphosate or imazapyr is recommended for lesser celandine control. These are both non-selective herbicides, and will injure all vegetation including grasses. Care must be taken when using these products to reduce off target damage.

Lesser celandine must be treated in late winter to early spring. Plants go dormant by early summer (usually by June.) Always reseed an area with native plants to add competition.

Contact the Mason County Noxious Weed Control Board with questions about herbicide application.

