

# Lesser celandine

*Ranunculus ficaria*



## HABITAT:

- Shade tolerant, commonly near water, low forested floodplains, damp meadows, open woods

## ECOLOGICAL IMPACTS:

- Its tubers shoot up and form leaves in the late winter and it spreads to create dense patches that block sunlight for other native plants like spring ephemerals <sup>1</sup>



## Plant at a Glance:

1. **Leaf:** basal rosette, heart or kidney-shaped, vary in size, dark green, lower leaves are opposite
2. **Flower:** symmetrical, 8 yellow petals, star shaped, grow on single stalks that rise above leaves
3. **Fruit:** dry fruit, globose in shape

## TIMING:

- Blooms March - May
- Seed germination in late May through early June

## MANAGEMENT:

- Small infestations: hand pull or dig up - removing the root systems, bulblets and tubers at the stem bases to prevent regrowth. Dispose of in bags.
- Large infestations: Use a nonionic surfactant if found near water to decrease harm to plants and amphibians (follow label directions when applying any herbicide)

## Native Alternative:

Marsh marigold, *Caltha palustris*

- Blooms April to mid June
- **Habitat:** wet woodlands, swamps, marshes
- **Benefits and Uses:** grows in large clumps and blooms early in spring, bringing color to the garden or natural landscape.
- **Growing tips:** does best in moist conditions with full or partial sun and muddy soil. Tolerates shallow standing water in spring.



**References:** <sup>1</sup>Kaufman, Sylvan Ramsey, and Wallace Kaufman. *Invasive plants: a guide to identification, impacts, and control of common North American species*. Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2007. Print.

**Photos:** courtesy of J.K. Lindsey, Maastricht University, Ecology of Commanster  
<<http://www.commanster.eu/commanster/Plants/Flowers/SpFlowers/Ranunculus.ficaria.html>>.