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

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, bulbets 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.


Photos: courtesy of J.K. Lindsey, Maastricht University, Ecology of Commanster

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