

March Invasive Plant Highlight

Lesser Celandine



What is Lesser Celandine?



Lesser Celandine invading a forest

Lesser Celandine, *Ranunculus ficaria L.*, is native to Europe, northern Africa, western Asia, and Siberia and is also known as Fig Buttercup. It is believed to have been first introduced to North America as an ornamental in the mid-1800s and escapes were reported in Pennsylvania in 1867.

Lesser Celandine is known as a "spring ephemeral" owing to the time of year when the short-lived plants and flowers are present above ground.

Plants have a basal rosette of dark green, shiny, stalked leaves that are kidney- to heart-shaped. The flowers open in March and April, have eight glossy, butter-yellow petals, and are borne singly on delicate stalks that rise above the leaves.

Lesser Celandine is a threat particularly to the native forest spring ephemerals that must compete for light and space with this invasive.



Lesser Celandine tubers

Pale-colored bulblets are produced along the stems of the above-ground portions of the plant but are not apparent until late in the flowering period. The combination of tubers, bulblets and seeds can spread the plant rapidly.

Better Groundcovers

Alumroot, Wild Ginger, Green and Gold, Mayapple, Jack-in-the-pulpit, and Allegheny Spurge

Please Remove It!

If you have Lesser Celandine, please remove it before it spreads into other adjacent properties. Lesser Celandine produces finger-like tubers that form underground and tiny bulblets under the leaves. The tubers, bulblets and seeds can all spread rapidly. It is very important to remove all bulblets and tubers. For small infestations, Lesser Celandine may be pulled up by hand or dug up using a hand trowel or shovel. All parts of the plant as well as any soil near the plant must be placed in a bag and thrown in the trash. Do not compost or leave on the ground. Larger amounts may need to be chemically treated in the spring when the plant is visible.

More information about Lesser Celandine:

<https://www.invasive.org/weedcd/pdfs/wgw/lessercelandine.pdf>

Why Native Plants?

As open space disappears, it is necessary to look at our own landscapes for biodiversity. Native plants promote the unique relationships between our native plants and animals, from the smallest microorganisms, insects and other invertebrates to birds and mammals.

Native plants, from grasses and wildflowers to towering shade trees, form the base of the food chain. Our native insects are uniquely adapted to eat native plants. Some are generalists and can eat a variety of plants, but many are specialists that can only digest certain types of leaves based on the chemistry of the plant.

Research by the entomologist Doug Tallamy has shown that native oak trees support over 500 species of caterpillars whereas ginkgos, a commonly planted landscape tree from Asia, host only 5 species of caterpillars. When it takes over 6,000 caterpillars to raise one brood of chickadees, that is a significant difference.

More information on native plants:

www.vnps.org/natives

www.plantnovanatives.org

www.nwf.org/NativePlantFinder

www.audubon.org/native-plants

More information on invasive plants:

www.invasiveplantatlas.org

www.invasive.org



Native Virginia Bluebells

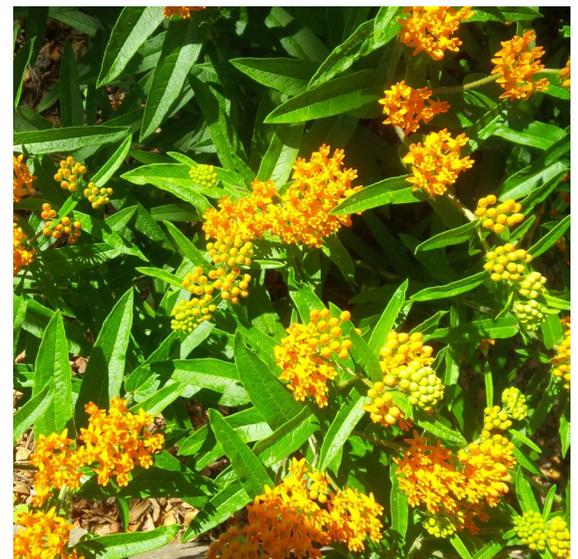
Who We Are?

The City of Falls Church Habitat Restoration Team restores the local ecosystem in city parks. We remove damaging invasive plants then re-plant with natives that benefit our local birds, butterflies, bees, and pollinators.

We are a community task force that supports the City's Green Space department. We have monthly events in the Fall and Spring open to volunteers.

Contact Information

Website: www.fallschurchva.gov/940/Environmental-Opportunities



Native Butterfly Weed