

Greater Celandine (*Chelidonium majus*)

DESCRIPTION:

Often called just celandine, this small, weedy, Eurasian perennial is typically found in degraded woodlands, shady roadsides, dumps, and similarly disturbed areas. It is the greatest threat to disturbed woodlands (which is to say, effectively all woodlands in our region) in urban and suburban areas, but is becoming common in some rural areas.

Greater celandine has been used as an herbal remedy for digestive tract issues and skin conditions. However, we urge herbalists not to grow this species in our region but to purchase extracts if desired. Under the NR40 law, it is illegal to buy/sell or even transport live plant material or seeds of this invasive plant within the state of Wisconsin.

IDENTIFICATION:

Greater celandine is low to the ground early in its life cycle but flowers at a height of 1-2 feet. This species is often confused with wood poppy (*Styllophorum diphylllum*), which is sometimes called celandine poppy, adding to the confusion. Wood poppy is native to the southern and eastern US, being widely introduced elsewhere. It is attractive and ecologically harmless.

Wood poppy may be distinguished by the larger flower petals (> 1.5 cm) which often overlap to form a flat-disk or cup-shaped flower and later developing pubescent, ellipsoid (football-shaped) fruit. Greater celandine flowers have smaller petals which are clearly separated from each other in a cross-shape. The seeds are born in skinny silique-like pods (similar to those of mustards) which are held in upright clusters. The difference in fruit shape are the easiest way to differentiate these two remarkably similar species.

Both species have relatively large leaves which are greatly dissected into deep lobes or leaflets. These primary, cauline leaves are arranged opposite each other in wood poppy and alternately in greater celandine.

CONTROL METHODS:

Organic: Second year plants may be hand pulled or dug-out

with a garden knife. Be sure to wear gloves as the orange/yellow sap of the plant may cause skin irritation.

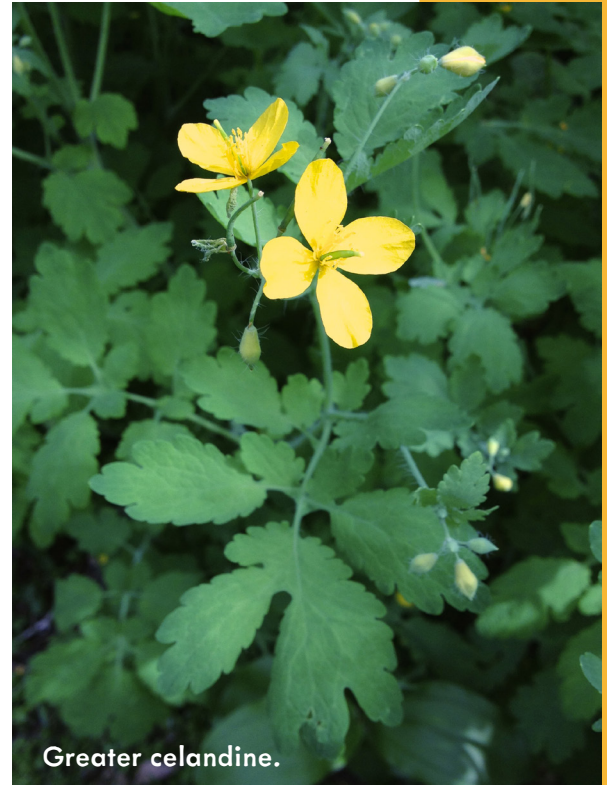
Chemical: Plants may be foliar sprayed with a glyphosate (Round-Up®, etc.) or triclopyr (Garlon®, etc.) herbicide solution when temperatures are above 40 degrees Fahrenheit. However, because the leaves of this species are somewhat hydrophobic, and additional surfactant should be added to the herbicide mix to improve adhesion and absorption. Care should be taken to apply herbicide only to non-flowering plants to mitigate impact to pollinator insects and to prevent seed maturation.

These recommendations are not a substitute for the pesticide label. The label is the law; read it and follow the instructions before applying any pesticide.

NATIVE ALTERNATIVES:

Wild geranium, trillium, and bellwort are all large, showy, native woodland wildflowers that bloom around the same time as celandine.

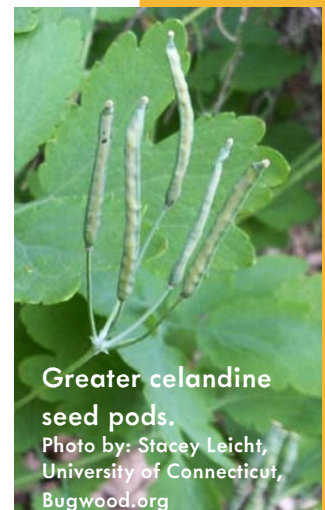
-4
Exotic
Invasive



Greater celandine.



Wood poppy. Notice the fuzzy, inflated seed pods.



Greater celandine seed pods.

Photo by: Stacey Leicht,
 University of Connecticut,
Bugwood.org