

February

Invasive of the Month



Lesser Celandine (*Ficaria Verna*)

Also known as Fig buttercup this perennial flowering plant is native to Europe and parts of northern Africa and Asia. It first arrived in the United States in the 1860s as an ornamental plant. It prefers moist soils in partial shade and thrives along streambanks. However, it can also grow in drier upland areas. It is a low growing plant, often blanketing entire areas of land. Part of the reason why it is so invasive is because of its early emergence. It begins to appear as early as January, with the flowers blooming in March. It has been found in most of the eastern United States, as far west as Missouri, and has also been reported in the Pacific Northwest.

Invasive Species Program

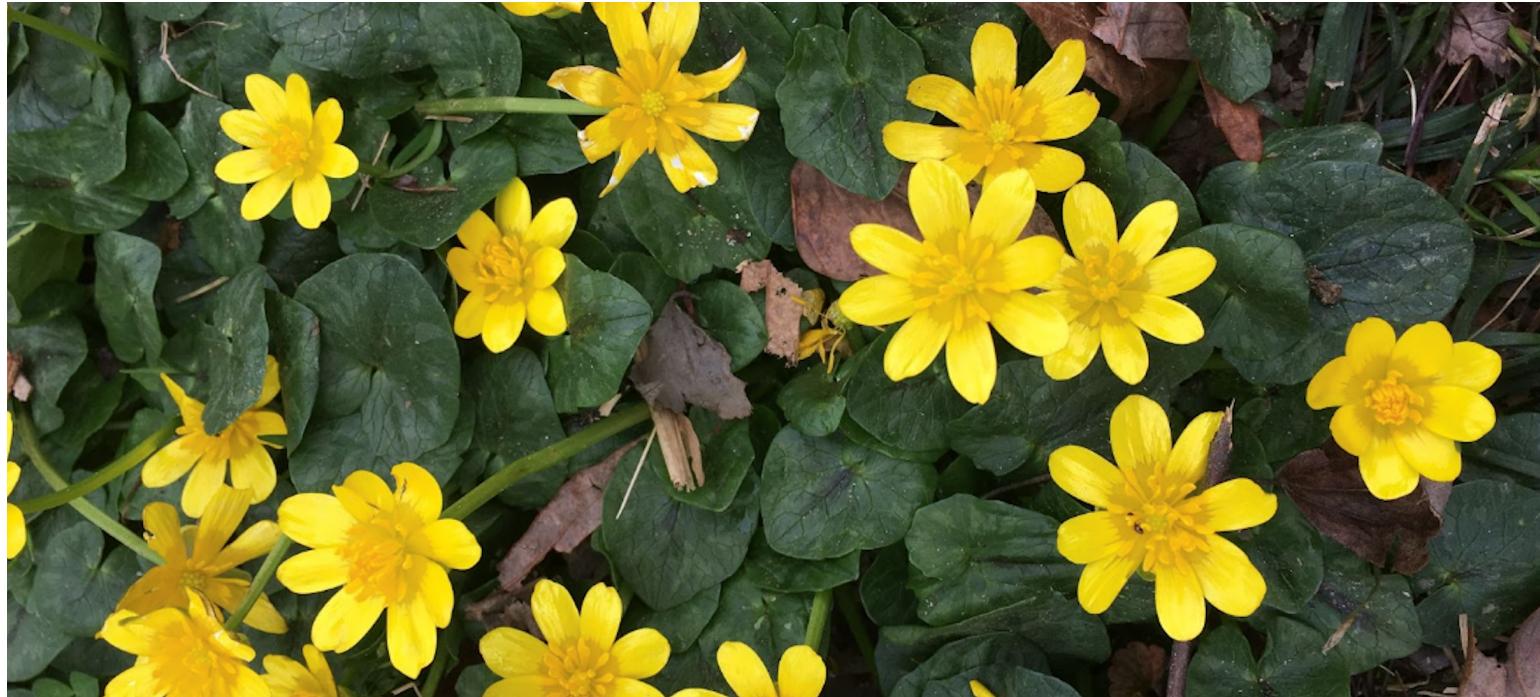
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How to identify:

Lesser Celandine has dark green, shiny, kidney shaped leaves with rumpled edges. The flowers are a bright yellow with 8-12 petals. It grows low to the ground with an average height of 4-12 inches. Leaves begin to appear in the winter with the flowers blooming in late February through April. By the early summer the flowers and leaves die back and the plant becomes dormant. Fig buttercup likes to grow along stream banks or along a flood plain forest. There are many native look-a-likes in North Carolina but a key identifier to look out for is the number of petals on the flower (8-12) and the kidney shaped leaves.

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