

New Invaders Watch Program

Early Detection and Rapid Response Network

COMMON NAME: FIG BUTTERCUP

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Ranunculus ficaria* var. *bulbifera*

FAMILY: *Ranunculaceae*

ORIGIN: Eurasia including Europe, Northern Africa, Western Asia, Caucasus, and Siberia

US INTRODUCTION: Introduced as an ornamental garden plant

MAJOR PATHWAYS OF SPREAD:

- Distribution and use for ornamental gardens
- Contaminated soil
- Animals
- Water

IDENTIFICATION CHARACTERISTICS:

- Perennial herbaceous flowering plant can create large dense mats and blooms in March and April, spreads by seed and vegetatively
- Leaves kidney- to heart-shaped, succulent, dark green and shiny in a basal rosette
- Flowers bright rich yellow with a slightly darker yellow center, have 8 (typical) to 12 petals, and are borne singly on delicate stalks above the leaves.
- Tiny cream colored bulblets are produced in stem axils and many fingerlike tubers are produced by the roots
- Fruits (many) in round heads are hairy
- Threatens wet woodlands and forests, ravines, and floodplains

NATIVE LOOK-ALIKES:

Fig buttercup may be confused with marsh marigold (*Caltha palustris*). Marsh marigold is more robust and less delicate than lesser celandine and has flowers on stalks that are 8 inches or more in height and consist of five to nine deep yellow "petals" (actually sepals). Marsh marigold does not produce tubers or bulblets. It also resembles celandine (*Chelidonium majus*) and celandine poppy (*Stylophorum diphyllum*), which can be distinguished from lesser celandine by having flowers with four petals.

There are many varieties of fig buttercup including a double-flowered form with many petals and dark green leaves mottled with silvery markings.



Population with flowers



Flower close-up



Young plant



Marsh marigold flower



Fig buttercup flower

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Plant Conservation Alliance Factsheet.
<http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/rafi1.htm>

USDA Plants Database.
<http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=RAFI>