

Citizen Science & the invasive Fig Buttercup



Buttercup (*Ficaria verna*, formerly *Ranunculus ficaria*) is an early-blooming perennial with origins in Europe and northern Africa. It is also called Lesser Celandine, and it is sometimes confused with Marsh Marigold (*Caltha palustris*). Because of its showy yellow flowers, it has apparently been enjoyed in gardens for many years, mostly in the Northeast.

More recently, its behavior has transitioned or is in the process of transitioning to that of an aggressive invasive species that threatens bottomlands throughout its adopted range. Even after its invasiveness was recognized, many people did not anticipate that it would behave invasively in the South, as it has begun to do.

Why the heightened concern?

Isn't this just another new invasive about which we all shake our heads and sigh?

- One reason for the urgency is Fig Buttercup's three-prong reproductive strategy, utilizing separated root fragments, small bulblets borne in the leaf axils and/or seeds to produce new plants onsite and downstream. These lingering vegetative propagules make it very, very difficult to get rid of, once established.
- Another reason, is that it is currently established in only a few places in the South (that we know of). If regulatory agencies across the South can be persuaded to ban this plant, we have a chance to prevent its further spread. In South Carolina we can be thankful that our regulatory officials recognized its invasive behavior; Fig Buttercup is now illegal in the state! but the word is slow to get out. Many homeowners don't yet know, and the naturalized plants themselves couldn't care less....

Be a Citizen Scientist

We are asking you to help us scout areas near you where it is likely to be found, so that emerging infestations can be documented, treated and monitored. **You can learn when and where to look for it, how to recognize it, and what to do if you find it in the below video:**



Learn More

Fact Sheets & Brochures:

- [SCNPS Fig Buttercup Fact Sheet](#)
- [Clemson University's Fig Buttercup Brochure](#)
- [Pennsylvania DNR's Invasive Plants Sheet](#)

Articles

- [Lesser Celandine \(*Ranunculus ficaria*\): A Threat to Woodland Habitats in the Northern US and southern Canada](#)
- [Under the radar? *Ficaria verna* quietly naturalizing in the Southeast](#)

If you suspect that you have found a Fig Buttercup

Please [click here to notify](#) the Clemson University Department of Plant Industry and the SCNPS.

- Or you can contact Clemson University Department of Plant Industry at 864.646.2140
- Or you can contact your local Clemson University Extension Service office

In the meantime, please avoid disturbing the area to prevent further spread.