

Ficaria verna, Lesser Celandine

Lesser Celandine is a spring ephemeral, making the window for scouting out populations very small compared to other plants. (The foliage dies back by the end of May) It is in the buttercup family, and resembles other members of that family. The entry point into the United States of this plant is estimated to be Pennsylvania and its origin is Eurasia.

Population Status: Confirmed- Columbia, Greene, and Albany Co., Historical- Saratoga Co.

Description: Lesser Celandine is most commonly found in wet soils in large patches. The plant has root tubers which can be spread by soil movement and prefers moist and sandy soil of forest clearings and streambeds. The leaves are cup shaped in most cases and have ridged edges with a dark green color.

Control: Dig up the entire plant, making care to get all the small bulbils and surrounding soil. Bag all detritus from plants and surrounding soil, disposing of in a plastic bag.

Look-alikes: Marsh Merigold (native) grows in clumps and has uniform flowers with five to nine petals.

Flower Time and Description: This plant has that narrow window for scouting efforts, which should be done from March-May when the plant is flowering. The flowers are yellow but can also be whitish and have seven to twelve petals.

