

Creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*)



Atypical yellow-flowered buttercup commonly found in pastures, gardens, cultivated land, and waste places

• Perennial plant that spreads by hairy stolons (horizontal stems that creep along the ground for up to 1 m, rooting and forming new plants at each node).

- Once the daughter plant has established, the stolon decays, allowing the daughter plant to grow independently
- Flowers are glossy yellow, with five petals and between 2 and 3 cm in diameter
- Larger mother rosettes with many leaves produce a great number of primary stolons and hence more daughter plants
- Leaves are hairy, triangular in shape, about 5 cm wide by 4 cm long, and divided into three distinct lobes, with the central leaflet being attached on a short stalk
- Each flower is followed by a rough green ball of 20-40 achenes, each achene about 3–4 mm in length, including its small hooked beak.

Origin and habitat

- Native to Europe, North Africa, and south-west Asia, now widely distributed throughout New Zealand
- Thrives under wet soil conditions, and is prevalent in ditches and low-lying areas
- Prefers fertile and consolidated soils which are waterlogged for short periods
- Grows well under moderate temperatures and moderate light intensity

Life-cycle

- Can re-grow from fragments of root crown or stolon, so the plant must be removed in its entirety to eliminate regrowth
- Large stolons spread from the base of the plant and daughter plants grow at the nodes of the stolon
- Spreads faster by vegetative reproduction when in bare ground or when surrounding plants are grazed heavily
- Individual plants rarely survive longer than about 18 months, but by that time each plant has produced several daughter plants
- Flowers between October and February and seeds germinate in spring
- Seeds can be dispersed in water or by animals
- Daughter plants are more likely created by vegetative reproduction than by seedling establishment.

Impact

- Creeping buttercup competes with native species for water and nutrients.
- During spring and summer months it can be very visible in the wetland landscape due to its erect, bright flowers.

Control

Creeping buttercup is not affected by low rates of glyphosate.

Active ingredient	When to apply	Residual effect	Grass damage
2,4-D ethylhexyl ester /2,4-DB	Late autumn, early winter or early spring. Seedlings will be killed but mature plants will only be burnt off, particularly by bentazone and the butyric formulations (MCPB or 2,4-DB).	Moderate	No
bentazone + MCPB		Slight	No
MCPA		Moderate	No
MCPB		Slight	No
MCPB + MCPA		Moderate	No
flumetsulam		Slight	No
thifensulfuron-methyl		Slight	Slight