



# Whatcom Weeds

Whatcom County Noxious Weed Control Board 901 W. Smith Road Bellingham WA 98226  
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## FLOATING PRIMROSE-WILLOW

*Ludwigia peploides*

**THREAT:** Floating primrose-willow is an aquatic plant, native to South America and parts of the southern United States. It has been introduced to other areas of the U.S. and to Europe as an ornamental, due to its bright yellow flower. Since this plant reproduces from plant fragments, as well as by seed, it can spread easily and quickly. Aside from being spread by water, this plant is also spread by waterfowl and human activity (such as shipping and recreational boating). Floating primrose-willow creeps along shorelines and forms dense mats of vegetation out into the water that can impair flow and restrict shoreline activities. In Europe, it has been known to colonize riverbanks and wet pastures.



**DESCRIPTION:** Floating primrose-willow is an aquatic, perennial plant that prefers shallow areas and can tolerate slow moving water. The creeping stems can be branched or unbranched, and form dense clumps of roots at the nodes. These adventitious roots can absorb atmospheric oxygen, while other roots attach the plant to the substrate. The plants have alternate leaves, which can be variable in shape (egg-shaped to long and linear). The bright yellow flowers usually have 5 petals. Flowering stems are creeping or floating, which can help differentiate this plant from the very similar water primrose (*Ludwigia hexapetala*), which has upright flowering stems. These two closely related plants sometimes grow together. The plants form dense mats that creep out from the shoreline, sometimes leaving little or no open water.

**MANAGEMENT OPTIONS:** Control methods are not well known for this species. Like all aquatic weeds, control is difficult and eradication may be unrealistic. To prevent the spread of any of these plants, trailers, boats and fishing gear should be carefully inspected to avoid transporting plant materials between water bodies. Floating primrose-willow can be manually or mechanically removed, but care must be taken to prevent plant fragments from escaping and further spreading the plant. Covering with opaque material or the use of herbicides may be effective. Contact the weed control board for site-specific recommendations.

Photo: King County Noxious Weed Program