



# Whatcom Weeds

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## WATER PRIMROSE

*Ludwigia hexapetala*

**THREAT:** Water primrose is an aquatic plant, native to South America and the southeastern 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). Water primrose creeps along shorelines and forms dense mats of vegetation out into the water that can impair flow and restrict shoreline activities.

**DESCRIPTION:** Water primrose is an aquatic, perennial plant that prefers shallow areas and can tolerate slow moving water. The plants have slightly hairy, alternate, willow-like leaves and bright yellow flowers, which usually have 5 petals. Flowering stems can rise up to 3 feet above the water surface and the plant blooms throughout the summer. The white roots are feathery at the nodes and are suspended in the water. The plants form dense mats that creep out from the shoreline, sometimes leaving little or no open water. Water primrose can be confused with other introduced aquatic primrose species.

**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. Water primrose 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.

