



# Control Options for Creeping Buttercup

## General Information

Creeping buttercup is a plant native to Eurasia that has become a troublesome weed in the Pacific Northwest. Although there are several members of the buttercup family in this area, both native and introduced, creeping buttercup is the most difficult to control. This plant spreads both by seed and by creeping stems that root at the nodes. This allows the plant to outcompete other plants, especially in grazed pasture. Additionally, creeping buttercup can be toxic to livestock. Although buttercup is harmless once it is dry, hay contaminated with buttercup can spread the seed to new locations. Buttercup prefers moist areas, but once established, can survive if sites become drier. In this area, buttercup is commonly found in pastures, gardens, lawns, yards and other moist or disturbed sites.

## Manual/Mechanical Techniques

Small infestations of buttercup can be controlled through digging and pulling. Care should be taken to remove as much plant and root fragments as possible. Control efforts will need to be repeated for as long as necessary to remove resprouts. To manage buttercup in pasture situations, it is important not to overgraze fields. Grazing rotation will also allow grass to recover and better compete with buttercup.



## Chemical Recommendations

Creeping buttercup can be managed using specific herbicides. Since the plant is often growing with other desirable plants and grass, care should be taken not to injure off-target plants. When using herbicides, always read and follow label directions for rates, spraying conditions, personal protective equipment and grazing intervals. If spraying is the chosen option, spray late in the evening to reduce the direct impact on pollinating insects. Do not spray when it is windy or raining, or when rain is forecast. Herbicides should not be sprayed within 60 feet of water bodies and creeks, without further consultation with the Noxious Weed Board. Remember, it is the herbicide applicators responsibility to apply the product in accordance to the instructions on the label.

Herbicides which containing **MCPA** (many trade names) or **Aminopyralid** (Milestone) are effective in controlling creeping buttercup when it is actively growing. Products containing **Glyphosate** (e.g. Round Up® and many others) are effective when applied in summer or fall. Glyphosate will also kill surrounding plants. Pay careful attention to label instructions on all products and follow directions closely.

***NEVER apply RoundUp® or other herbicides to standing water unless they are distinctly labeled for aquatic use.*** Ingredients in non-aquatic products may be toxic to fish and other aquatic organisms. Aquatic formulations of herbicides are generally only available to licensed pesticide applicators in Washington State. If the target plants are immediately adjacent to or are in standing water, a state permit may be required in order to treat those plants with an aquatically approved herbicide.

- **Always read and understand the label of the herbicides you choose to use.**
- **More is NOT better when using herbicides, and may actually hinder the ability of the herbicide to injure the target plant if the solution is too strong. This wastes money and effort and puts more product into the environment than is necessary. ALWAYS follow the recommended rates on the label.**
- **With all herbicides, when you apply them is as important as how you apply them.**

*The mention of a specific product brand name in this document is not, and should not be construed as an endorsement or as a recommendation for the use of that product.* Herbicide information is taken from the WSU Pacific Northwest Weed Management Handbook and King County Noxious Weed Program.