

Lesser celandine

Ranunculus ficaria



What to look for

One of the first woodland flowers of the year

The flowers are shiny yellow with eight to twelve petals

The leaves are heart-shaped

Where found

Damp woodland paths and tracks as well as on stream banks and in ditches. It grows well in the shade of hedgerows too

When to look

It's a perennial herb, flowering in March-May

Not to be confused with

Winter aconite (*Eranthis hyemalis*)



Did you know?

Lesser celandine was once thought to be a remedy for haemorrhoids and was known as 'Pilewort'!

The Celts called it Grian (sun) as its petals close up before rain

Its leaves are high in vitamin C and were used to prevent scurvy

The poet Wordsworth was so fond of lesser celandine flowers that he had them carved on his tomb

Found throughout Europe and West Asia, it is now introduced into North America

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, celandine comes from the Latin *chelidonia*, meaning swallow - it was said that the flowers bloomed when the swallows returned



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