Chelidonium majus  
(Celandine)

**Common Name(s)**
Celandine

**Full Scientific Name**
Chelidonium majus L.

**Family Name Common**
Poppy family

**Family Scientific Name**
Papaveraceae

**Images**
- Basal rosette
- Broken stem with orange sap
- Flowers
- Habit
- Incursion
- Fruit

**Introduction in New England**

**Habitats in New England**

**Threats**

**Early Warning Notes**

**Management Links**

**Documentation Needs**

**Additional Information**

**References**

**Data Retrieval**

**Maps of New England Plant Distribution**

http://www.lib.uconn.edu/webapps/ipe/browsing.cfm?descriptionid=108
NOMENCLATURE/SYNONYMS

Synonyms: None

DESCRIPTION

Botanical Glossary

*Chelidonium majus* is a brittle, herbaceous biennial that reaches 30-80 cm (11-31 in.) in height. Its stems are ribbed and branching. The lower parts of the branches are pubescent. When the branches or leaves are broken a yellowish-orange sap can be seen. The alternate cauline leaves can be up to 35 cm (13 in.) in length, with petioles measuring 2-10 cm (0.75-4 in.) long. The thin leaf blades are glaucous beneath, deeply 5-9 lobed and are irregularly dentate around the margins. The veins of the lower leaf surfaces have fine, short hairs.

The bright yellow flowers of *Chelidonium majus* are contained in axillary pedunculate umbels. The peduncle itself measures 2-10 cm (0.75-4 in.) long. Each flower has four obovate to oblong petals that measure about 1 cm (0.4 in.) wide. This plant usually flowers from May to June. The "lumpy" capsules are linear to oblong-shaped and measure 2-5 cm (0.75-2 in.) in length. Within the capsule are black seeds with reticulate pitting on their surface.


SIMILAR SPECIES

*Glaucium flavum* Crantz. (Yellow hornpoppy) [IPANE Catalog of Species Writeup]

*Stylophorum diphyllum* (Michx.) Nutt (Celandine poppy)* Picture of *S. diphyllum*

*Cardamine impatiens* L. (Bushy rock-cress)**

*Stylophorum diphyllum* is non-native to New England (it is native further south), but is often cultivated.

**The basal rosettes of *Cardamine impatiens* could be confused for *Chelidonium majus*. The leaves of *Chelidonium majus* are pubescent, while those of *Cardamine impatiens* are glabrous.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th><em>Chelidonium majus</em></th>
<th><em>Glaucium flavum</em></th>
<th><em>Stylophorum diphyllum</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leaves</td>
<td>Hairy</td>
<td>Hairy</td>
<td>Not hairy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flower size</td>
<td>Petals 1cm (0.4in.)</td>
<td>5-9cm wide (2-3.5in.)</td>
<td>Petals 2-3cm (0.75-1.2in.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit Shape</td>
<td>Linear-oblong</td>
<td>Sublinear</td>
<td>Ellipsoid</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Fruit Size**

| Fruit Size | 2-5 cm (0.75-2 in.) | 15-30 cm (6-12 in.) | 2-3 cm (0.75-1.2 in.) |

**REPRODUCTIVE/DISPERSAL MECHANISMS**

The seeds of this plant are ant-dispersed. This movement is facilitated by an elaiosome on the seed which attracts the ants so that they move it.

**DISTRIBUTION**

*Chelidonium majus* is native to Eurasia from Spain to Turkey and Russia, north to Great Britain and Ireland and south to North Africa. In the United States it is located from Maine to Georgia and west to Minnesota, Iowa and Missouri. There are also reports of it in Washington, Montana and Utah. This plant has been reported from all the states of New England.

**HISTORY OF INTRODUCTION IN NEW ENGLAND**

*Chelidonium majus* was most likely introduced into New England as an herbal remedy for skin diseases. It was reported to be in New England herb gardens as early as 1672. From these gardens the plant became naturalized and spread across the landscape.

**HABITATS IN NEW ENGLAND**

Early Successional Forest
Edge
Floodplain Forest
Open Disturbed Area
Roadside
Vacant Lot
Wet Meadow
Yard or Garden

*Chelidonium majus* is most often found in disturbed areas especially with moist soil. Conceivably its seeds could be moved to other habitats by ants.

**THREATS**

*Chelidonium majus* can become abundant in minimally managed situations, and can outcompete other native herbaceous plants.

**DOCUMENTATION NEEDS**

Documentation required: Habit shot with fruits or flowers
Best time for documentation: Spring, summer
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Integrated Taxonomic Information System
Taxonomic information about the species

PLANTS Database
General information and map

Flora of North America
Extensive description and distribution information

Wisconsin State Herbarium
Images

Image from a Sampler of Wayside Herbs
Image and description of historical herbal uses of the plant

REFERENCES


LA 70874-4490 USA.

DATA RETRIEVAL

Select a task by clicking the radio button and then click "Submit Selection."

- Formatted display as table
- Export as comma-delimited text file

Submit Selection

MAPS OF PLANT DISTRIBUTION IN NEW ENGLAND

Select a study area by clicking the radio button and then click "Submit Selection."

- The whole New England area
- One or more states
- One or more counties
- One or more towns (county sub-divisions)

Submit Selection