



# Tall Buttercup

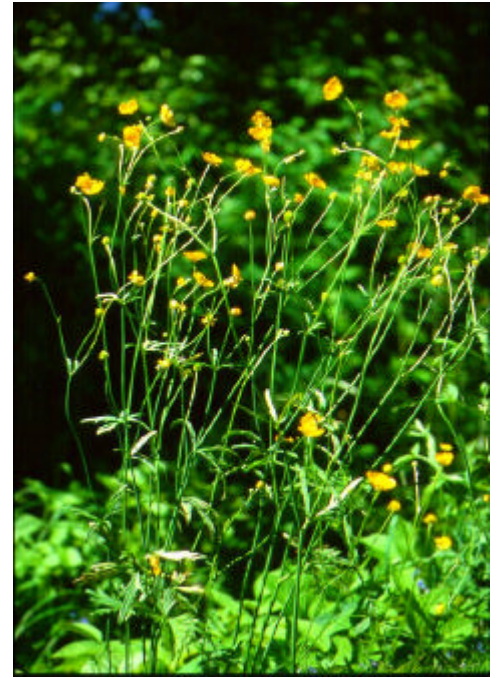
*Ranunculus acris*

## Description:

Tall buttercup is a perennial forb that reproduces by seed only. It prefers moist to well-drained soils, flourishing in wet ditches, meadows and along creeks. The stems contain an acrid juice that causes pain and inflammation in the mouths of grazing animals.

**Stems** are erect, hollow, sometimes hairy, highly branched in the upper part of the plant, and grow to 90 cm tall.

**Leaves** on the lower stem are 38 cm long, on long stalks and deeply divided into 3-5 lobes. The upper leaves are smaller, hairy and are divided into 3-4 narrow segments. Basal leaves have no stalks, 3 simple lobes and are 1-2 cm long. The amount and depth of the leaf lobes is highly variable.



**Flowers** are bright yellow, on long stalks, and have 5 petals, each 10-14 mm long. The upper surface of the petals is waxy, giving them a shiny, lacquered appearance. The tiny, brown-black seeds are carried easily by water.



## Control

Tall buttercup is a prolific seed producer capable of invading undisturbed pastures. Its toxic juices make it unpalatable to wildlife and livestock, allowing the plant to rapidly invade and dominate grazed pastures, native meadows and stream banks.

A number of herbicides have proven effective on Tall buttercup, but only certain herbicides can be used near open water bodies, and even then a narrow buffer must not be sprayed. With that in mind, and the fact that this weed prefers wet areas, control becomes very difficult. Tall buttercup can be hand-pulled or dug out, but soil disturbance must be kept to a minimum - wear gloves and long sleeves as the plant's juices can cause blistering and redness.

Drought significantly curtails this weed's spread, but a viable seed bank resumes invasion when wetter weather returns.

Prevention is the best control strategy for any invasive plant, but particularly with hard-to-control ones like Tall buttercup. Insist on weed-free forage and seed, and learn to distinguish Tall buttercup from native buttercups so that control measures can be taken early – the best chance for eradication.

