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### *Oxalis pes-caprae*

[Synonyms : *Acetosella cernua*, *Acetosella ehrenbergii*, *Bolboxalis cernua*, *Oxalis burmanii*, *Oxalis cernua*, *Oxalis cernua* var. *namaquana*, *Oxalis concinna*, *Oxalis ehrenbergii*, *Oxalis grandiflora*, *Oxalis kuibisensis*, *Oxalis libyca*]

**BERMUDA BUTTERCUP** is an invasive bulbous perennial. Native to Cape Province, South Africa it has primula-like yellow flowers.

It is also known as *Acetosella gialla* (Italian), African oxalis, African woodsorrel, *Azedas* (Portuguese), Bermuda sorrel, *Bouton d'or des Bermudes* (French), Cape sorrel, English weed, *Erva-canária* (Portuguese), *Erva-pata* (Portuguese), *Geelsuring* (Afrikaans), *Geissfuss* (German), *Gelber Sauerklee* (German), *Getfot* (Swedish), *Getoxalis* (Swedish), Goat's foot, *Haxixa ingliza* (Maltese), *Kap-Surklöver* (Danish), *Kyslička* (Slovak), *Oseille du Cap* (French), *Oxalis* (Swedish), *Oxalis penché* (French), *Oxinudhi* (Greek), *Pied de chèvre* (French), Sorrel, Soursob, *Štável kozi noha* (Czech), *Surelle* (French), *Surklöver* (Swedish), *Trébol de huerta* (Spanish), *Trebolina* (Canary Island), *Trevilho* (Portuguese), *Trevo* (Portuguese), *Trevo-azedo* (Portuguese), Yellow sorrel, Yellow sourgrass, *Ziegenfuss-Sauerklee* (German), and *Zurkel* (Dutch).

Warning – some authorities believe bermuda buttercup could be poisonous if taken in large amounts. Certainly it can cause kidney damage in grazing livestock

*Pes-caprae* is derived from Latin *-pes* (foot) and *capri-* (goat, she-goat) components meaning 'like a goat's foot'.

According to records this perennial was introduced to Sicily in 1796, Libya in 1824, Portugal in 1825, Iran in 1928 and Pakistan by the 1940s. At some point it was introduced to Bermuda on the western side of the Atlantic and according to some authorities it was from Bermuda (not South Africa) that it was introduced to Malta in the Mediterranean in 1806 as an ornamental plant and had become naturalised there by 1811. This sequence of events is said to have led to the common name, Bermuda buttercup – despite the fact that other authorities claim that bermuda buttercup reached Malta direct from Cape of Good Hope in South Africa in 1806.

The leaves have been eaten raw or cooked in South Africa, and the sour-tasting roots have been eaten occasionally in North Africa and in southern France.

On the Canary Islands the shrub is sometimes viewed as a poor form of cattle fodder.

Bermuda buttercup is not welcomed outside its native habitat. Environmental considerations aside, the cost of controlling the spread of the plant and crop loss from its encroachment can run into hundreds of thousands of pounds annually. In countries around the Mediterranean it seems to be viewed as a garden pest. It was introduced to Australia in 1839 either in contaminated soil or as an ornamental plant direct from its native South Africa and is viewed in its new home as a noxious invasive weed. It can not only infest crops but it is also considered to be a threat to sheep which will eat sufficient to be poisoned in times when other green plants are scarce. In California in the United States it is also recognized as an invasive weed.