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*Ranunculus asiaticus*

**GARDEN RANUNCULUS** is a perennial. Native to south-western Asia and south-eastern Europe, it has small scarlet (white in Crete and yellow in Cyprus) flowers with many dark stamens.

It is also known as Asiatic buttercup, *Bukettranunkel* (Swedish), *Jaskier azjatycki* (Polish), Persian buttercup, Persian crowfoot, Persian ranunculus, *Pryskyřník asijský* (Czech), *Ranuncolo asiatico* (Italian), Ranunculus, *Renoncule des fleuristes* (French), Scarlet crowfoot, Turban buttercup, and Turban ranunculus: and in flower language is said to be a symbol of ‘you are rich in attractions’.

There are many cultivated varieties.

*Asiaticus* means ‘of or from Asia’.

For some people garden ranunculus is the ‘lily of the field’ referred to in the Christian *Bible*.

Garden ranunculus is believed to have been introduced to Western Europe in the late 16<sup>th</sup> Century. For nearly two and a half centuries its ever-increasing popularity appears to have had no bounds among British gardeners at least. By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century some authorities suggested that the number of its varieties exceeded those of any other species – indeed by 1820 a catalogue is said to have listed 400 of them. However this ‘bubble’ seems to have burst a quarter of a century later when gardeners are said to have been referring to it as a ‘neglected flower’.