

Ranunculus bulbosus

[Synonyms : *Ranunculus bulbosus* var. *dissectus*, *Ranunculus bulbosus* var. *valdepubens*, *Ranunculus speciosus*]

BULBOUS BUTTERCUP is a perennial. Native to Europe (including Britain) it has small golden yellow (occasionally pale yellow or white) flowers.

It is also known as Acrid crowfoot, Bachelor's buttons, Biting crowfoot, Blister flower, Blisterweed, *Bouton d'or* (French), Bulblet buttercup, Bulbous crowfoot, Burrwort, Butter and cheese, Butterbump, Butterchurn, Buttercrease, Butter cress, Buttercup, Butter-daisy, Butter flower, Butter rose, Caltrops, *Chwys Mair* (Welsh), Cowslip, Crazy, Crazy bet, Crazyweed, Crowbells, Crowfoot, Crowfoot buttercup, Crowpickel, Crowpightle, Crowtoe, Cuckoo buds, Dalecup, Dellcup, Dewcup, Dillcup, Eggs and bacon, Fairgrass, Fairies' basins, Frogsfoot, Frogwort, Gilcup, Gildcup, Giltcup, Giltycup, Glennies, Gold balls, Goldcrap, Goldcup, Goldencup, Golden knob, Gold knob, Goldweed, Goldy, Golland, Gowan, *Hahnenfuss* (German), Horsegold, *Iskernik hl'uznatý* (Slovak), *Jaskier bulwkowy* (Polish), *Jaunet* (French), Kingcup, King's clover, King's cob, King's cup, King's nobs, *Knolboterbloem* (Dutch), *Knolliger Hahnenfuss* (German), *Knölränunkel* (Swedish), *Knölsmörlomma* (Swedish), Lawyerweed, Maiden-in-the-meadow, *Mäkileinikki* (Finnish), Marybuds, Maybuds, Meadowbloom, Meadowgold, Old man's buttons, Paigles, *Pi de yon à nouais* (Channel Islander-Guernsey), *Piè corrino* (Italian), Pilewort, *Pipot* (Channel Islander-Jersey Norman-French), Pissabed, *Pryskyřník bambulínatý* (Czech), *Pryskyřník hlíznatý* (Czech), *Ranuncolo* (Italian), *Ranunculo* (Spanish), *Renoncule bulbeuse* (French), St. Andrew's turnip, St. Anthony's rape, St. Anthony's turnip, Sitsicker, Soldier buttons, Teacups, Turnip buttercup, Yellow caul, Yellow creams, Yellow crees, Yellowcup, Yellow gollan, and Yellowweed; and in flower language it is said to be a symbol of childishness, ingratitude, and riches.

The flowers are particularly pollinated by bees.

Warning – bulbous buttercup is poisonous when fresh (especially the sap and the bulb-like base of the stem). It can only be used under the supervision of a qualified practitioner. Handling the plant can cause dermatitis. It is poisonous for some animals.

Bulbosus means 'bulbous or swollen'.

Beggars in Europe used to rub the plant (sap) on their skin to ensure some open sores that would create pity. In the 16th Century the English author, printer and cleric, Robert Crowley (1518 ?-1588) offers a remarkable description of this in his *One and Thyrtie Epigrammes*.

I heard two beggars that under an hedge sate,
Who did with long talk their matters debate.
They had both sore legs most loathsome to see,
All raw from the foot well most to the knee.
'My leg,' quoth the one, 'I thank God is fair.'
'So is mine,' quoth the other, 'in a cold air,
For then it looketh raw and as red as any blood,
I would not have it healed for any world's good.
No man would pity me but for my sore leg,
Wherefore if I were whole I might in vain beg.

I should be constrained to labour and sweat,
And perhaps sometime with scourges be beat.
Some authorities also claim that it was the bulbous buttercup to which the famous
English playwright and poet, William Shakespeare (1564-1616) referred in the song at
the end of *Love's Labour's Lost*.

.....
And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue,
Do paint the meadows with delight,
The cuckoo then, on every tree,
Mocks married men

It is said that pigs are particularly partial to these roots.

Bulbous buttercup came to be known in North America and the Iroquois Indian tribe included it
in their medicinal repertoire (despite the hazards of the sap). A plant decoction was taken
as a cure for venereal disease and the roots were used to ease toothache.

Medicinally, European herbalists have used the plant to treat gout and rheumatism, and in the
16th Century especially many of the practitioners were convinced that blistering generated
by the plant would aid recovery from one of the common European scourges of the time,
bubonic plague. In the past they also claimed that its use was an effective remedy for
shingles and sciatica.