

*Ranunculus sceleratus*

[Synonyms : *Batrachium sceleratum*, *Hecatonia palustris*, *Hecatonia scelerata*, *Ranunculus eremogenes*, *Ranunculus holophyllus*, *Ranunculus oryzetorum*, *Ranunculus sceleratus* var. *multifidus*, *Ranunculus sceleratus* var. *sinensis*]

**CELERY-LEAVED BUTTERCUP** is an annual to perennial. Native to Europe, Canada and to northern and western United States, it has small pale yellow flowers with many stamens.

It is also known as Biting crowfoot, *Blaartrekkende boterbloem* (Dutch), *Blåsrånunkel* (Swedish), Blister buttercup, Blisterwort, Buttercup, Celery crowfoot, Celeryleaf buttercup, Celery-leaved crowfoot, *Crafanc yr Eryr* (Welsh), Cursed buttercup, Cursed crowfoot, Ditch crowfoot, *Gift-Hahnenfuss* (German), *Iskerník jedovatý* (Slovak), *Jaskier jadowity* (Polish), *Kabikaj* (Persian), *Konanleinikki* (Finnish), Marsh crowfoot, Mountain wolfbane, Poison cock foot, *Pryskyřník lítěý* (Czech), *Renoncule scélérate* (French), *Tiggarrånunkel* (Swedish), Water celery, and Water crowfoot; and in flower language it is said to be a symbol of brilliance, and ingratitude.

The flowers are pollinated by small flies.

Warning – the sap of the fresh plant is poisonous. It should not be taken internally except under supervision from a qualified practitioner. It can cause a burning sensation in mouth and throat, abdominal pain, diarrhoea, nausea, vomiting, haemorrhage, loss of balance, impaired vision, convulsions, coma and death. The bruised plant can cause severe skin blisters. It is poisonous for animals and can cause death. Cows that have eaten celery-leaved buttercup can produce bitter-tasting, reddish milk.

The leaves of celery-leaved buttercup can be confused with those of both garden parsley (*Petroselinum crispum*) and wild celery (*Apium graveolens*).

*Sceleratus* is derived from Latin *scelus* (evil deed, crime) meaning ‘poisonous, wicked or hurtful’.

The name Crowfoot recognizes the alleged resemblance between a crow’s foot and the shape of the leaf.

In parts of Europe local people cooked and ate the plant (the water in which it was boiled was thrown out).

It is also enjoyed in its natural habitat by aquatic birds, as well as providing shelter for fish that feast on some of the aquatic animals that themselves enjoy eating the plant. Obviously this is something that anglers take note of.

Celery-leaved buttercup is another of the species that beggars once used to raise sores on their skin to gain sympathy when begging. But unlike sores made by many of the other species they could have used sores from celery-leaved buttercup are likely to have been extremely difficult to heal.

North American Thompson Indians used to rub the plant or the flowers on the tips of their arrows to coat the latter with poison.

Medicinally, herbalists once recommended a diluted tincture of celery-leaved buttercup as a remedy for stitch in the side. It has also been used to treat pneumonia, asthma and rheumatism.

It is the birthday flower for 20<sup>th</sup> August.

