

Water Primrose

Species Description

Scientific name: *Ludwigia grandiflora*

AKA: Often incorrectly identified as *L. peploides* and labelled in garden centres as *Jussiaea*; Briallen d ŵr (Welsh)

Native to: South America

Habitat: Still or slow-flowing water

Quite distinctive in floating form, more care is needed to distinguish it from other species when it is growing in the margins of water bodies. Best searched for when in flower (July to August). Spreads primarily by plant fragmentation but also by seeds. There are few native species in the UK that are similar.

Only known from a few sites in the UK and it has been eradicated from some of these. *L. x kentiana* is the only other non-native species of *Ludwigia* known to occur in the UK. Distinguishing between non-native species of *Ludwigia* is very difficult. If this is required expert consultation may be necessary.

Introduced to Europe as an ornamental and water garden plant. Causes severe negative impacts, including out-competing native species and clogging waterways.

Water Primrose is listed under Schedule 9 to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 with respect to England and Wales. As such, it is an offence to plant or otherwise allow this species to grow in the wild.

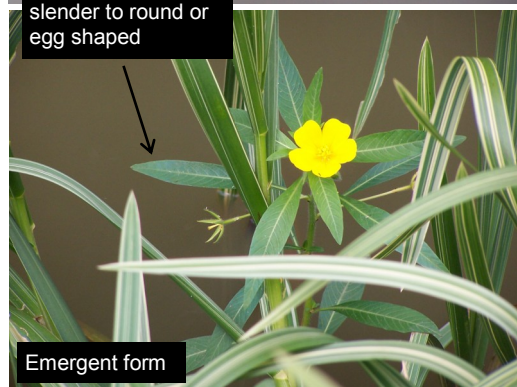
For details of legislation go to www.nonnativespecies.org/legislation.



Key ID Features



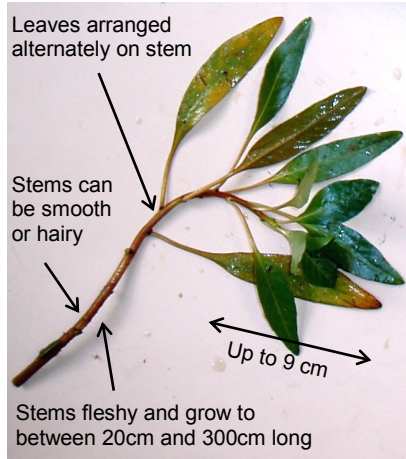
Leaves can vary in shape from long and slender to round or egg shaped



Emergent form



Floating form



Leaves arranged alternately on stem

Stems can be smooth or hairy

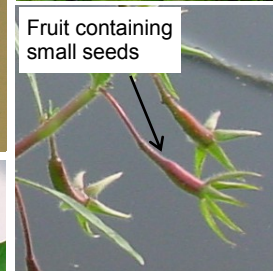
Up to 9 cm

Stems fleshy and grow to between 20cm and 300cm long



Approx 3 cm

Bright yellow flowers with five petals



Fruit containing small seeds



Dark green with a lighter green central vein (midrib)

Identification throughout the year

Flowers from July to August. Vegetation dies back in winter leaving distinctive brown stems.



Distribution

Has been present at a limited number of sites across the British Isles although it has been eradicated from some of these.

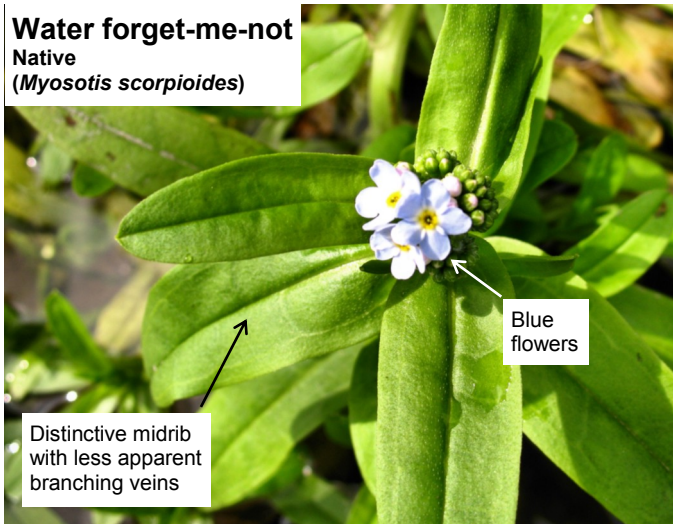
Source: redrawn from Defra 2007



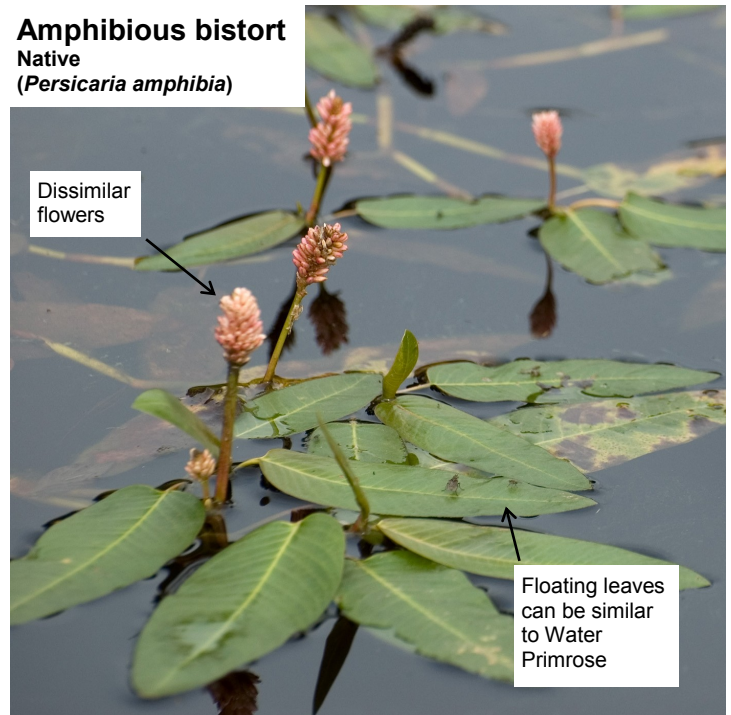
Similar Species

There are few similar species with which Water Primrose could be confused. The leaves of aquatic forget-me-nots (*Myosotis* species) have a distinctive midrib with less distinctive branching veins, unlike Water Primrose. When the floating leaves of amphibious bistort (*Persicaria amphibia*) first appear they resemble Water Primrose, but are significantly larger when full grown with dissimilar flowers. Hampshire purslane (*Ludwigia palustris*) is a very rare plant of boggy areas. Although closely related to Water Primrose, it is considerably smaller.

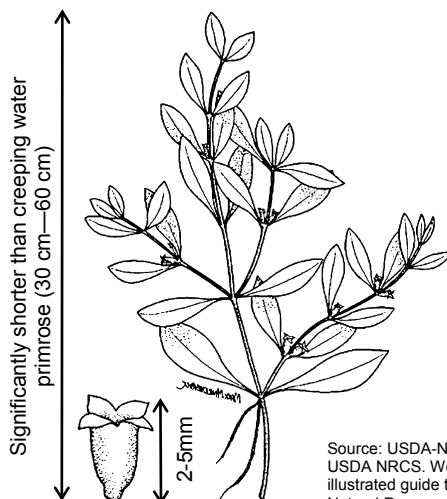
Water forget-me-not
Native
(*Myosotis scorpioides*)



Amphibious bistort
Native
(*Persicaria amphibia*)



Hampshire-purslane
Native
(*Ludwigia palustris*)



Source: USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database
USDA NRCS, Wetland flora Field office
illustrated guide to plant species. USDA
Natural Resources Conservation Service

References and further reading:

Blamey, M, Fitter, R and Fitter, A (2003) *The Wild Flowers of Britain and Ireland. The Complete Guide to the British and Irish Flora*. A & C Black

Defra (2007). *Eradication strategies for invasive non-native Ludwigia species—PH0422*. Defra

Preston, C D, Pearman, D A and Dines, T A (editors) (2002) *New Atlas of the British and Irish Flora*. Oxford University Press

Stace, C (1999) *Field Flora of the British Isles*. Cambridge University Press