Creeping Water-primrose

Species Description

**Scientific name:** *Ludwigia peploides*

**AKA:** Often incorrectly identified as *L. grandiflora* and labelled in garden centres as *Jussiaea; Briallen dŵr* (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. hexapetala* is the only other non-native species of *Ludwigia* known to occur in the UK, although water-primrose (*L. grandiflora*) has often been incorrectly recorded. Distinguishing between non-native species of *Ludwigia* is very difficult. If this is required expert consultation may be necessary.

Introduce 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

- **Floating form**
  - Leaves can vary in shape from long and slender to round or egg shaped
  - 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
  - Fruit containing small seeds
  - Bright yellow flowers with five petals
  - Dark green with a lighter green central vein (midrib)

- **Emergent form**

www.nonnativespecies.org/legislation
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.

Similar Species
There are few similar species with which creeping water-primrose could be confused. The leaves of aquatic forget-me-nots (Myosotis species) have a distinctive midrib with less distinctive branching veins, unlike creeping water-primrose. When the floating leaves of amphibious bistort (Persicaria amphibia) first appear they resemble creeping 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 creeping water-primrose, it is considerably smaller.

Water forget-me-not
Native
(Myosotis scorpioides)

Amphibious bistort
Native
(Persicaria amphibia)

Hampshire-purslane
Native
(Ludwigia palustris)

References and further reading:

Photos from: Stephen Buchan, Alain Dutartre, Niall Moore, William Olsen, Donna Storz