Lesser celandine is a low-growing perennial herb with shiny, somewhat lustrous dark green leaves that form a rosette. Leaves are kidney to heart shaped with smooth to coarse toothed edges. Each rosette forms a single bright yellow flower that is up to one inch wide. Seeds ripen early and the entire plant dies back by early summer, but not before it has developed numerous tubers in which it has stored energy for early growth the next year. Plants may spread by seed, or by unearthed tubers that may be moved around by seasonal flooding events. Large colonies of lesser celandine can cover acres of forest floor. They are easy to spot in the spring because of the high density of bright yellow flowers on the bright green carpet of leaves. Maine’s only recorded population flowered in late April and early May.
Missouri. It also has naturalized in several states in the Pacific Northwest. As of 2002, it has not been reported from any natural areas in Maine, though it was observed growing as a weed in flowerbeds in Kennebec County.

**Control**

**Mechanical:** Small infestations of lesser celandine can be dug out using a hand trowel or small shovel. Effective removal of the plants from a site requires the removal of all plant parts, including underground tubers, as each tuber is capable of producing a new plant. The tubers are small and may be overlooked in the soil, so return visits should be made over the next couple of years to locate and remove stray plants.

**Chemical:** For larger infestations, herbicide treatment is a more practical approach. This prevents excessive soil disturbance from digging, which could lead to colonization by other invasive plants. Herbicide should be applied in the early part of the season when plants are in leaf—preferably before native nontarget species have come up. This limits the time frame for herbicide application. Make plans in advance to ensure that treatment is applied at an optimal time. An application of a 0.5 percent mixture of a glyphosate-based herbicide can be sprayed on the leaves of the plants when the temperature is expected to be above 40 degrees F, and no rain is forecast for the next 12 hours. If the target population is in a wetland, be sure to use an herbicide formulated for those conditions. Glyphosate is nonspecific herbicide and will kill lesser celandine as well as desirable vegetation that it contacts, so avoid spraying nearby native plants. Use herbicides responsibly and follow manufacturer’s directions. Contact the Maine Department of Agriculture for information on restrictions that apply to the use of herbicides. Consult a licensed herbicide applicator before applying herbicides over large areas.

**References:**


For more information or for a more extensive list of references on invasive species contact:

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