

# Tall Buttercup



flower

leaves

fruit

# Tall Buttercup

**Genus:** Ranunculus

**Species:** acris

**Priority Listing:** 2A

**Perennial**

Tall buttercup is native to Europe and Eurasia. Common names include meadow buttercup, tall buttercup, and giant buttercup. Tall buttercup produces fibrous, coarse spreading roots.

The stem of tall buttercup can grow up to 3 ½' in height. The leaves are softly hairy and dark green in color and are produced both at the base of the plant and alternately all along the hairy stem. Leaves are 1 to 4" wide and are deeply lobed. The lobes are coarsely toothed and point out like



Photo courtesy of Ken Chamberlain, Ohio State University; Bugwood.org

fingers of a hand. The flowers of tall buttercup are about 1" wide and are found in clusters atop the long stems. Flowers have 5 to 7 petals that are yellow and glossy.

Tall buttercup blooms from late May to September. It reproduces by seeds, which are flat with an egg-shaped outline, dark brown in color, and are about 1/8" long. Seeds also have a slightly curved tip.

Tall buttercup is **toxic** to grazing livestock because it contains oil called protoanemonin and if ingested it can cause blistering and irritation of

the skin and the lining of the mouth and digestive tract. The oil is released as animals graze on the fresh leaves and stems of tall buttercup.

**Interesting fact:** *In the 1800's fishermen in an attempt to bring worms to the soil surface poured buttercup tea onto the ground!* (<http://www.oardc.ohio-state.edu/weedguide/singlerecord.asp?id=320>)



Photo courtesy of Gerald D. Carr, University of Oregon

**Perennial:** a plant whose life spans several years

**Toxic:** poisonous quality based upon poisonous substances at the cellular level of organisms