

CREEPING



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GIANT



DESCRIPTION

Giant buttercup – *Ranunculus acris*

Creeping buttercup – *Ranunculus repens*

These are two similar species of buttercups, and they have so much in common that it is sensible to discuss them together.

Both types of buttercups are perennials. The giant buttercup forms a bush up to 1m tall, while the creeping buttercup is lower, with stems creeping along the ground for up to 1m.

Both have glossy yellow flowers with five petals, and of up to 25mm diameter. The flowers appear at the top of erect flowering stems. The giant buttercup flowers during Nov-Apr, while the creeping buttercup flowers Oct-Feb.

The leaves provide the best means of identification between the two types. Those of the giant buttercup are deeply jagged and appear as a single leaf, whereas the creeping buttercup leaves are more rounded and are clearly divided into three leaflets, the central of which is on a short stalk.

Buttercups are found throughout New Zealand, and prefer wet conditions, so are a particular problem on dairy farms and in high rainfall areas. Cattle and horses avoid eating the leaves, although sheep will eat them.

The seeds of the giant buttercup are often transported in hay, which is the most common source of new infestations.

Creeping buttercup has a very effective stolon system which allows it to quickly invade nearby weed-free areas where it will normally out-compete pasture grasses and clovers.

MANUAL CONTROL

Isolated plants will often appear on the margins of good pasture areas, and these can successfully be dug out and removed before they can invade too deeply into the pasture. It is essential that the entire root system is removed with the plant, because buttercups will regrow from rhizomes left in the soil on root segments.

HERBICIDE CONTROL

Best results will be achieved if plants are sprayed at their most active growth period, generally from right through spring and early summer to February.

Pasture:

- **Decision** at 50g/Ha for creeping buttercup, 65g/Ha for giant buttercup. **This option is clover-friendly.**
- **Ranger** herbicide (thifensulfuron-methyl) sprayed by boom at just 20g/Ha is very effective, and resistance to this herbicide does not appear to occur. This herbicide is also very effective against docks at that same application rate, so if both species are present they can be controlled with a single herbicide application. Nevertheless, a follow-up treatment is likely to be required the following spring.
- **Glyphosate 360** sprayed at 4-5L/Ha by boom for cleaning out prior to pasture renewal or cropping, will also take out any buttercups present. If using **Granny** then the rate is 1.8-2.25kg/Ha.

Orchards and Vineyards:

- **GA200** at 1-2L/100L water applied by handgun or knapsack. Add 100ml **SprayWetter** per 100L water.

