



A Northern Nevada Homeowner's Guide to Identifying and Managing Bur Buttercup

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Other common names: Curvseed butterwort, little bur, testiculate buttercup

Scientific name: *Ceratocephala testiculatus*

Family: Ranunculaceae

Description: A small, 2- to 5-inch tall plant that grows and flowers early in spring, bur buttercup produces stiff burrs that help spread this weed. It is toxic to livestock.

Leaves: Grayish-green, hairy, and attached at the base of the plant. Leaf blades look like fingers.

Stems: Short; extend outward from the base of the plant.

Flowers: Small, yellow, with 2 to 5 petals. Blooms from late winter to early spring.

Fruit: Forms many stiff, brown burrs. This is the point at which most people notice the plant.

Roots: Short taproot.

Native to: Eurasia; naturalized throughout much of the western United States

Where it grows: Roadsides, vacant lots, in pavement cracks and other disturbed or unmanaged sites

Life cycle: Winter annual (sprouts in fall and early winter)

Reproduction: Reproduces by seed



Typical plant growing in disturbed site.
(photo courtesy of Gary A. Monroe @ USDA-NRCS
PLANTS Database)



Seedlings have divided leaves that
look like fingers.

(photo courtesy of Dr. Clinton C. Shock, Oregon
State University)

Control methods: Bur buttercup should be controlled prior to seed formation. As this occurs very early in the spring, careful monitoring is needed to stop the spread of this weed.

Mechanical: Dig, hoe or pull young seedlings. Use mechanical control methods prior to formation of flowers and burrs.

Cultural: Thick mulches can help prevent seed germination. Plant desirable vegetation that will shade the area and reduce germination and growth of young plants.

Biological: None.

Chemical: Apply broadleaf-selective herbicides on young plants. Pre-emergence herbicides can be used to manage existing seed banks.

References:

- DiTomaso, J.M. and E.A. Healy. 2007. Weeds of California and Other Western States. University of California Publication 3488.
- USDA-NRCS Plants Database. No date. *Ceratocephala testiculatus* (Crantz) Roth, Curvseeded Butterwort, <http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=CETE5>
- Utah State University Cooperative Extension. 2010. Bur Buttercup. Range Plants of Utah, <http://extension.usu.edu/rangeplants/htm/bur-buttercup/>.
- Whitson, Tom D. (editor). 2002. Weeds of the West. University of Wyoming, Jackson, Wyoming.



The leaves are small and fingerlike.

(Photo by S. Donaldson)



Flowers are small, yellow and have 2 to 5 petals.

(photo courtesy of Dr. Clinton C. Shock, Oregon State University)



The seeds form in stiff burrs that turn brown in color when mature.

(Photo by S. Donaldson)

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