



## Meadow Buttercup



**Latin:** *Ranunculus acris*

**Irish:** *Fearbán féir*

**Other names:** Common Buttercup, Crowfoot, Gold Cup, Blister Weed, and Tall Buttercup

**Habitat:** Widespread and common in damper grassland habitats, road verges and marshy ground.

**Height:** It can grow from 30-100cm

**Flowers:** This pretty flower has five bright yellow, glossy petals, with five green sepals immediately below them. These are leaf-like parts of the plant that protect the flower as it grows.

The lively colour attracts small bees, hover flies and many other insects, which collect the nectar from the tiny cup-shaped scales at the base of the petals. This cup of nectar gives the buttercup its name.

**Seeds:** The peak of the fruiting season for the Meadow Buttercup is mid-August, by which time each flower head contains up to 30 seeds. Seed numbers per plant usually range from 200 to 1,000, but very large plants may contain up to 22,000 seeds in total. These seeds are hooked and are known as achenes.

**Leaves:** The leaves of a Meadow Buttercup grow along the stem. They are triangular shaped and can be quite hairy.

**Other:** The Meadow Buttercup is a poisonous plant and its sap can blister the skin. Grazing animals usually avoid it as it can cause them to suffer from stomach pain when eaten fresh. However, it is usually safe for them to eat it when dried in hay.

When animals or humans walk over buttercups in the fields or garden, it causes a lot of damage to them. However, buttercups have a circle of very strong leaves growing around at its base and will usually grow again if cut by a lawn-mower. For this reason, it is often seen as a weed by gardeners.