



# FACT SHEET

## SULFUR CINQUEFOIL

(*Potentilla recta*)

- Sulfur cinquefoil grows one to three feet in height.
- Each plant can have one or more stems, which are stout, leafy and hairy with no branches below the flowers.
- The leaves are also hairy.
- Each leaf has five to seven leaflets which are two to four inches long and half an inch to an inch wide.
- The flowers have five light sulfur-yellow petals surrounding a dark yellow center.
- Each flower is half an inch to one inch in diameter. They bloom from late May throughout the summer.
- Rose family.



### LOOK ALIKES:

Sulfur cinquefoil may be confused with buttercups (*Ranunculus spp*) or with several of our native cinquefoils (*Potentilla spp*). However, the flowers of buttercups and all of the native cinquefoils are bright yellow, not the distinctive sulfur-yellow of sulfur cinquefoil.

### DISTRIBUTION:

Only a few (8-10) sulfur cinquefoil sites have been found in Jefferson County—mostly on Eaglemount and Center Roads.

**Call if you see this plant.**

### WHY BE CONCERNED?

- Sulfur cinquefoil is extremely invasive, particularly in meadows, where it can outcompete grasses and reduce forage productivity.
- It is unpalatable to livestock.

**Sulfur cinquefoil is a Class B Noxious Weed.**

**Control is required in Jefferson County.**

## ECOLOGY:

- Sulfur cinquefoil can thrive in many different conditions; logged areas, waste areas, roadsides and abandoned fields are typical habitats. It cannot survive in dense shade.
- A perennial, it sends up new shoots each year from the edge of the root mass. The center slowly dies, so older plants have a circle of living stems around a core of dead material.
- A single taproot is surrounded by shallow, spreading branch roots. The taproot extracts water from deep in the soil and the shallow roots take advantage of light summer rain.
- It reproduces mainly by seed, but root fragments can grow, and stems that are knocked to the ground can produce roots and grow.

## CONTROL

**Because sulfur cinquefoil is very hard to control once established, prevention and early detection and removal are strongly advised.**

- **Practice** good pasture management; avoid overgrazing, irrigate and fertilize as needed, and reseed bare ground. A healthy pasture will resist weed invasion.
- **Use** weed free hay and seed; avoid introducing weed-contaminated soil.
- **Clean** equipment that has been used in areas known to have Sulfur cinquefoil.
- **Remove** seedlings when young; newly established plants can usually be pulled without leaving root fragments in the ground.
- **Replant** newly weeded areas with desirable (preferably native) plant species that will discourage reinfestation.
- **Dispose** of weeds properly, bag or burn seed heads or fragments that may resprout.
- **Monitor** site for several years; promptly remove new seedlings.

**HANDPULLING** can be effective if care is taken to remove the root crown.

**MOWING** is not an effective control measure, because the extensive root system stores food reserves and sends up new shoots after mowing.

No **BIOLOGICAL CONTROLS** are recommended. Because sulfur cinquefoil is closely related to strawberries, a crop with considerable commercial value, there are concerns that an insect that attacked sulfur cinquefoil may also attack strawberries.

**HERBICIDES** can be effective, but should always be applied with care. Do not apply herbicides over or near water bodies. Read the label to check that you are applying a herbicide in the right place, to the right plant, at the right time, and in the right amount. For perennial weeds, long term control requires stopping seed production **and** attacking the weed's root system. Translocated herbicides, (ones that move throughout a plant's system) are recommended. These are most effective on young, actively growing plants because the herbicide moves around the plant more quickly. Also, herbicide is more easily absorbed by clean, new leaves.

- **Note:** Most herbicides will **NOT** prevent germination of weed seeds already in the soil, so monitoring and retreatment are necessary.

**Call the Weed Board for specific herbicide advice.**