

Common Name: **Celandine**

Genus: *Chelidonium*

Species: *majus*

Family: Papaveraceae

AKA: Garden Celandine, Greater Celandine, Swallow-woort, Tetterwoort



Historical Uses:

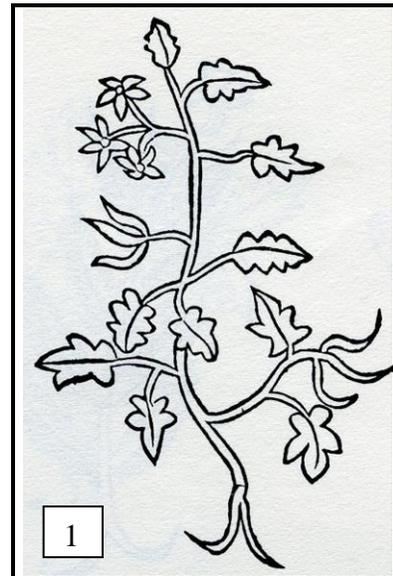
**Medical:** “The juice of the herbe is goode to sharpen the sight, for it clenseth and consumeth away slimie things, that cleaue about the ball of the eie, and hinder the sight and especially being boiled with honie in a brazen vessel, as *Dioscorides* teacheth. The roote cureth the yellow jaundice, which cometh of the stopping of the gall, especially when there is no ague adjoined with it, for it openeth and delivereth the gall and liver from stoppings. The root being chewed, it is reported to be good against the tooth-ache.

I have by experience found (saith *Clusius*) that the juice of the great celandine dropped into small greene wounds of what sort soever, wonderfully cures them.”(1)

**Household:** Bruised leaves yield a sap the color of gold. Used in illumination of illustrations and text.

**Folklore/Astrology:** Warm and dry in the fourth degree and belongs to the Sun.(2) Hot and dry in the third degree.(3)

**Other:** “A drug plant in the Middle Ages and is mentioned by *Pliny*, to whom we owe the tradition that it is called *Chelidonium* from the Greek *chelidon* (a swallow), because it comes into flower when the swallows arrive and fades at their departure.”(4)  
Not to be confused with Lesser Celandine (Pilewort).



Contemporary Uses:

**Parts Used:** Whole plant, sap.

Flowering plants are cut in summer and used in fresh infusions or tinctures, or as juice.

**Medicinal:** A cleansing, anti-inflammatory herb that improves bile flow, stimulates the uterus and circulatory system, and acts as an anti-

spasmodic, diuretic and a laxative. Used internally for inflammation of the gall bladder and bile duct, jaundice, hepatitis, gout, arthritis, and rheumatism; remittent fevers, spasmodic cough and bronchitis; skin eruptions, ulcers and cancer. Externally used for eye inflammations and cataract, bruises and sprains, warts, ringworm, psoriasis, eczema, and malignant tumors.(5)

**Cautions:** Not given to pregnant women. Orange sap produces yellow stains when handled.

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**Area of Origin:** Temperate Eurasia

**Physical description:** Branched upright stems with pale four petal yellow flowers.

**Plant type:** Perennial

**Height:** 1-2ft.

**Flower color:** Yellow

**Flowering period:** Spring to autumn

**Soil type/requirements:** Most soils

**Fruit:** Upright seed pods contain black seeds.

**Hardiness zone:** USDA 4-8

**Sun requirements:** Sun or shade

**Propagation:** By seed in spring; by division in spring

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Close-up of seed pods

### **Bibliography**

1. Gerard, p. 1069-1070
2. Anderson, p. 74-75
3. Gerard, p. 1069-1070
4. Grieve, p. 178-179
5. Bown, p. 165
6. Ibid.

### **Illustrations:**

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|--------------------|------|
| 1. Schoffer Herbal | 1484 |
| 2. PSUMG           | 2005 |
| 3. PSUMG           | 2005 |