

Oxalis pes-caprae

System: Terrestrial

Kingdom	Phylum	Class	Order	Family
Plantae	Magnoliophyta	Magnoliopsida	Geraniales	Oxalidaceae

Common name buttercup oxalis (English), sourgrass (English), sour sorrel (English, South Africa), Englishweed (English), African woodsorrel (English), soursob (English), yellow sorrel (English), Bermuda buttercup (English)

Synonym *Oxalis cernua* , Thunb.
Oxalis libica , Viv.
Oxalis pleniflora , Lanfranco
Bolboxalis cernua , (Thunb.) Small

Similar species

Summary *Oxalis pes-caprae* is a short, perennial herb that is native to southern Africa. It mainly reproduces vegetatively via bulbs, and can form large clonal colonies. Colonies flower synchronously, with distinctive bright yellow flowers that are large and cup-shaped. It is commonly found growing in agricultural areas, cultivated areas, fields, disturbed/ruderal zones, gardens, wasteland, riparian zones, dunes and scrubland.



[view this species on IUCN Red List](#)

Notes

Oxalis pes-caprae is listed as an invasive species by the European & Mediterranean Plant Protection Organisation (EPPO) (EPPO 2006a).

Reproduction

Oxalis pes-caprae reproduces vegetatively, via bulbs. The mechanism by which this occurs is an underground movement combination of shoot elongation and root contraction. This results in a very effective method of bulb dispersal. However *O. pes-caprae* is also very dependent on human and animal-mediated dispersal into new areas. (EPPO 2006b; Pütz 1994).

General Impacts

Oxalis pes-caprae can suppress other ruderal weedy plants, including native species, smothering them and leading to a reduction in biodiversity. The leaves are toxic and can pose a danger to livestock if growing in fields or grassy areas. *O. pes-caprae* growing in agricultural areas can also be a pest during harvesting and decreasing yield. The presence of *O. pes-caprae* has been shown to decrease cereal seed germinability by up to 63%. (EPPO 2006a; Lambdon 2006; Marshall 1987; Petsikos *et al.* 2007).

Management Info

Mechanical control: Some livestock (e.g. pigs, turkeys) are known to graze on the bulbs of *Oxalis pes-caprae*, and this can be used as a control measure. (Lambdon 2006).

Chemical control: Pre-emergence herbicides have been found to be effective against *O. pes-caprae*, particularly those containing glyphosphate or sulfonyl urea. *O. pes-caprae* is known to be resistant against dinitroline-based herbicides. (Lambdon 2006).

Principal source:

Compiler: IUCN SSC Invasive Species Specialist Group (ISSG) with support from the Overseas Territories Environmental Programme (OTEP) project XOT603, a joint project with the Cayman Islands Government - Department of Environment

Review:

Publication date: 2010-06-08

ALIEN RANGE

[1] AUSTRALIA	[1] BERMUDA
[1] CHILE	[1] CROATIA
[1] CZECH REPUBLIC	[1] DENMARK
[1] EGYPT	[2] FRANCE
[1] GIBRALTAR	[1] GREECE
[1] INDIA	[2] ITALY
[1] JAPAN	[1] MALTA
[1] MOROCCO	[1] NEW ZEALAND
[1] PAKISTAN	[3] PORTUGAL
[5] SPAIN	[1] TURKEY
[3] UNITED KINGDOM	[3] UNITED STATES

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36 references found for *Oxalis pes-caprae*

Management information

Csurhes, S. and R. Edwards, 1998. Potential Environmental Weeds in Australia: Candidate Species for Preventative Control [IUCN/SSC Invasive Species Specialist Group \(ISSG\), 2010. A Compilation of Information Sources for Conservation Managers.](#)

Summary: This compilation of information sources can be sorted on keywords for example: Baits & Lures, Non Target Species, Eradication, Monitoring, Risk Assessment, Weeds, Herbicides etc. This compilation is at present in Excel format, this will be web-enabled as a searchable database shortly. This version of the database has been developed by the IUCN SSC ISSG as part of an Overseas Territories Environmental Programme funded project XOT603 in partnership with the Cayman Islands Government - Department of Environment. The compilation is a work under progress, the ISSG will manage, maintain and enhance the database with current and newly published information, reports, journal articles etc.

[Lambdon, Phil 2006. Oxalis pes-caprae. DAISIE Factsheet \(Delivering Alien Invasive Species Inventories for Europe\)](#)

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[Vila, Montserrat; Gimeno, Isabel, 2007a. Effect of intercropping and ploughing on Mediterranean managed grasslands invaded by Oxalis pes-caprae. Plant Protection Quarterly. 22\(2\). 2007. 62-66.](#)

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Brandes, D., 1991. Sociology and Ecology of *Oxalis pes-caprae* L. in the Mediterranean Region with special Attention to Malta. *Phytocoenologia*. 19(3). 1991. 285-306.

Summary: In this paper the ecology and sociology of the neophyt *Oxalis pes-caprae* coming from South Africa is pointed out. In the centre of interest is the island of Malta, where the species was introduced to Europe for the first time 190 years ago. Because of its formation of numerous bulbills *Oxalis pes-caprae* is a dangerous weed in the coastal areas of the western and especially the central Mediterranean region. In Malta *Oxalis pes-caprae* is one of the most frequent species. The centre of its occurrence is in, respectively at old walls surrounding the fields. It great phenotypical plasticity.sbd.the length of the overground shoot is up to 70 cm.sbd.enables her to acquire the full light without accepting the disadvantages of rapidly parching wall crevices. *Oxalis pes-caprae* is able to build tight weed layers in communities of tall herbs (*Urtico-Smyrniotum*, *Lavatera arborea* community) as well as under trees, respectively under *Arundo donax*. The behaviour of the species in Italy, in the Iberian peninsula as well as in North Africa is pointed out by literature and own investigations. There *Oxalis pes-caprae* occurs mainly in irrigated cultures of Citrus but also in river accompanying woods as well as in *Ricinus communis* scrubs. Castro, Silvia; Loureiro, Joao ; Santos, Conceicao; Ater, Mohammed; Ayensa, Garbine; Navarro, Luis, 2007. Distribution of flower morphs, ploidy level and sexual reproduction of the invasive weed *Oxalis pes-caprae* in the western area of the Mediterranean region. *Annals of Botany* (London). 99(3). MAR 2007. 507-517.

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