

HOME GARDEN CARE :

4 Spring Weeds in the Mid-Atlantic Region

Here are descriptions and removal techniques for 4 common spring weeds in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. All are easily tackled by homeowners with the right tools, patience, and perseverance. They range from easiest to control to more challenging.

With all weed removal, it is really important to do the removal before the weeds set seed. Tackling these four in the spring will give you the best results. The last one, Lesser celadine, is ephemeral, so you can only remove it in the spring while there is above-ground growth.

Below are the tools I use and some resources for purchasing them. It is also helpful to have a bag of top soil on hand, and, if your weeds are in your lawn area, some grass seed as well. For Lesser celadine and Wild garlic, you will be digging up masses of tubers and bulbs, which will leave slight indentations in your lawn or garden beds. Fill the indentations with top soil, and if in the lawn, sprinkle with grass seed and water regularly until the grass is established.



My weeding tools:

- Gardening gloves (left) — any will do.
- Trowel (center) — love this trowel and use it for everything; worth the higher price tag!
- Weeder (right) — slightly bent from years of use!

That's all you need!

Online sources for tools:

Trowel: [Click here](#)

Weeder: [Click here](#)

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Hairy bittercress

Cardamine hirsuta



Member of the Mustard family; native to Eurasia.

Life cycle: Primarily a winter annual.

Growth habit: Basal rosette about 4–8” across of pinnate leaves; 1-3 pairs of leaflets with terminal, larger leaflet; tiny, 4-petaled white flowers in clusters at top of stems, followed by slender, upright seed capsules. Sequential flowers and seeds so remove as early as possible in spring before first seeds form.

Reproduction: Seed; when mature capsules pop explosively spreading them everywhere!



Removal:

- Shallow-rooted so it fairly easy to pull by hand. Use a weeder or trowel to make sure you get all the roots! Just pulling the green growth will leave the roots in the ground, from which new growth will emerge.

For More Info:

YouTube video:

[Click here](#)

Ground ivy or creeping Charlie

Glechoma hederacea



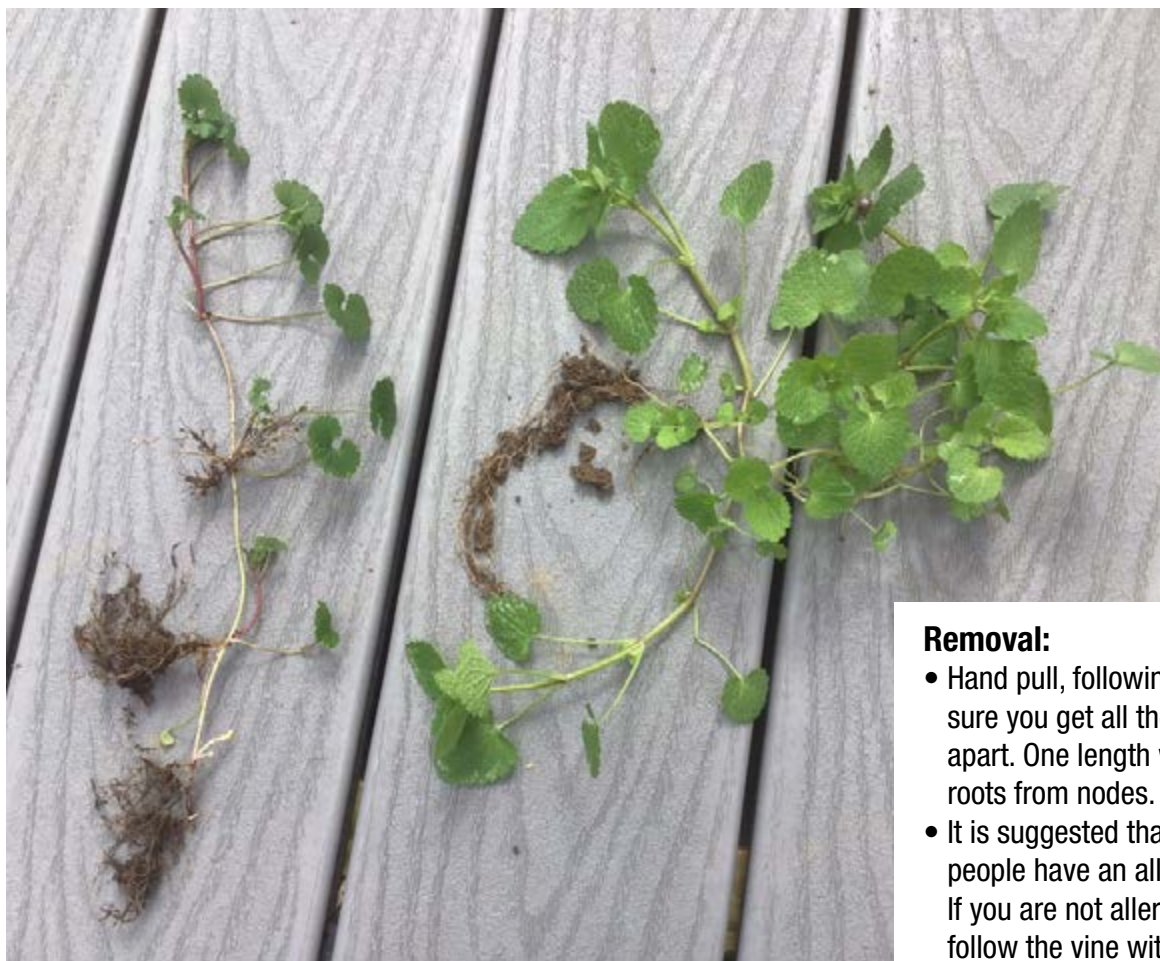
Description:

This perennial member of the mint family is a weed problem in turf and ornamentals. It has a violet-blue flower in whorls in upper leaf axils.. One of the better identification features is the scalloped edge of the round leaves. Acting as a vine it moves out from underneath trees and shrubs and creeps across the grass area rooting from the nodes as it travels.

Life cycle: Perennial.

Growth habit: Low, creeping plant that roots at nodes; distinct odor when crushed; stems square in cross-section; leaves opposite, scalloped, rounded to kidney-shaped and 1/2 to 1 1/2 inches in diameter.

Reproduction: Mostly by creeping stems that root at the node; less commonly by seeds which follow flowers so remove plant before seeds develop.



Removal:

- Hand pull, following along the vine to make sure you get all the roots and it does not snap apart. One length will have multiple roots as it roots from nodes. (See sample on left)
- It is suggested that gloves be used as some people have an allergic reaction to this plant. If you are not allergic to it, I find it easier to follow the vine with my bare fingers.

Wild garlic (or Wild onion)

Allium vineale



A member of the lily family with a bulbous base. The leaves are grass-like. It has spread become a noxious weed in lawns pastures and many other crops. The flavor and odor resemble the cultivated garlic but are much stronger so the plant is not usually eaten.

Life cycle: Perennial from bulbs.

Growth habit: Clumps of grass-like, thin leaves. Wild garlic leaves are round and hollow, while those of wild onion are flat and solid.

Reproduction: Produces clusters of many underground bulbs.



Removal:

- Using a weeder or trowel, dig up; make sure to get all the bulbs!
- Fill holes with top soil; if in a lawn area, sprinkle with grass seed and water regularly until grass is established.

Lesser celandine

Ranunculus ficaria var. *ficaria* (*Ficaria verna*)



INVASIVE: Wreaking havoc in our natural environment!

EPHEMERAL WEED — Only can be tackled in the early spring!

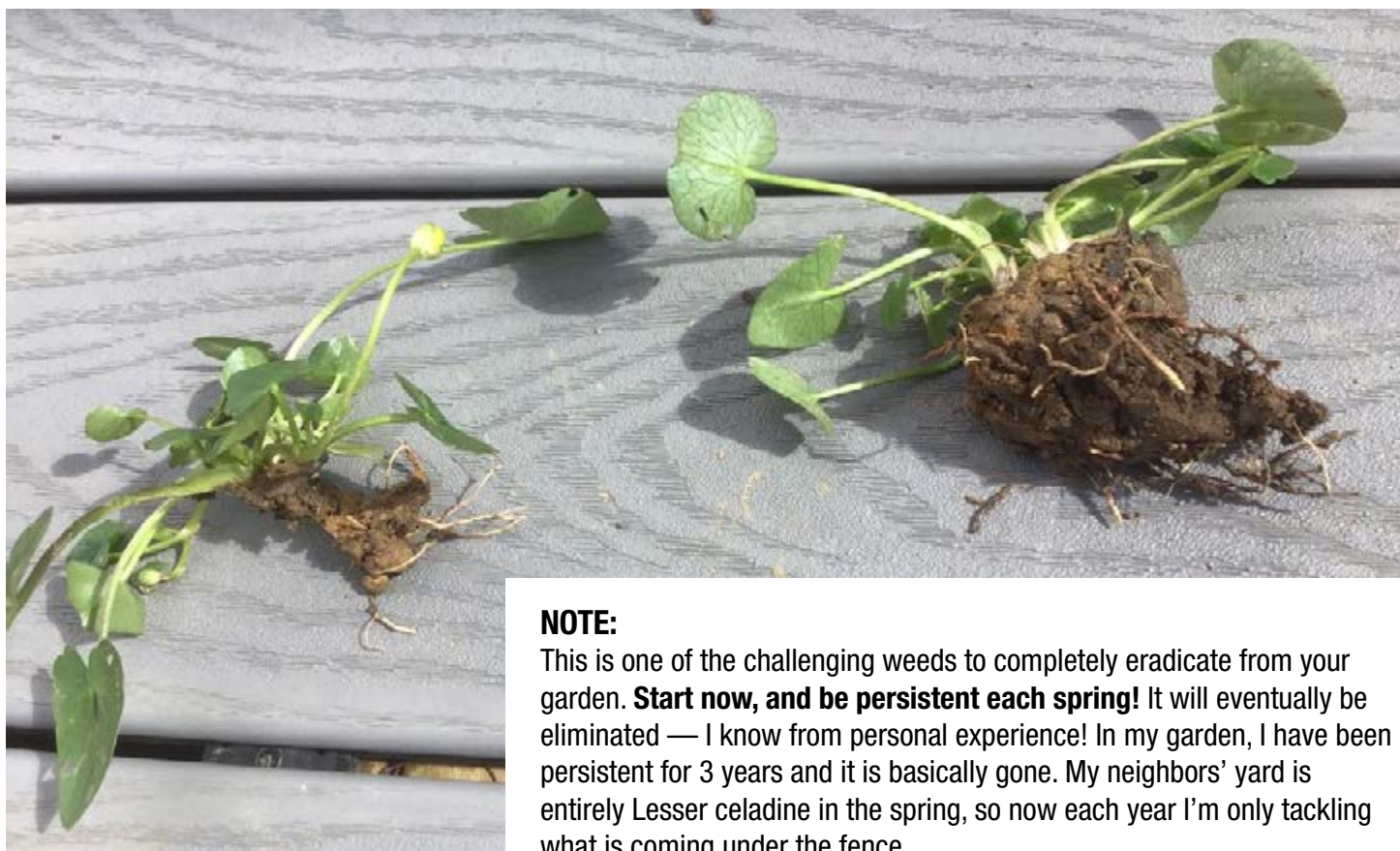
Life cycle: perennial, 3- to 9-in; herbaceous invasive found in moist, wooded floodplains.

Growth habit: introduced as an ornamental plant having shiny, dark green, kidney-shaped leaves; flowers with glossy, bright yellow petals in early spring; entire plant goes dormant in summer.

Reproduction: spreads by tuberous roots; additional bulbets develop after flowers above ground, so best to remove before flowers fade.

Removal:

- Dig up clumps with trowel; Make sure to remove all tuberous roots. Do **NOT** shake off excess dirt as the smaller tubers will fall off too! Plant on left shows tuber cluster; right plant is how much dirt you should leave attached as to assure all tubers are removed.
- Dispose of in trash — do **NOT** compost as home composters do not get hot enough to kill these tubers.
- Fill holes with top soil; if in a lawn area, sprinkle with grass seed and water regularly until grass is established.



NOTE:

This is one of the challenging weeds to completely eradicate from your garden. **Start now, and be persistent each spring!** It will eventually be eliminated — I know from personal experience! In my garden, I have been persistent for 3 years and it is basically gone. My neighbors' yard is entirely Lesser celandine in the spring, so now each year I'm only tackling what is coming under the fence.