

What's Up? Buttercup!



Common in disturbed areas



Forms bur-like seed heads



Each flower has 2-5 yellow petals



Small, lobed leaflets

Bur buttercup (*Ranunculus testiculatus*): Along with yellow and desert alyssum ([October 2017 Weed Post](#)), bur buttercup is one of the first weeds to flower in the spring. It is a non-native annual that often forms a carpet of yellow along roadways, parking lots, and other disturbed areas. Flowers, which have 2-5 yellow petals, last about 3-4 weeks and then form bur-like seed heads. These burs can cling to animal fur or human clothing, and they become very prickly as they dry. Other common names for bur buttercup are hornseed buttercup or curvseed buttercup, both describing the plant's bur-like anatomy. This species is a "dwarf" plant, growing only 1-3 inches tall. It has basal leaves that are <1 -4 inches wide, and leaves are divided into 3 ovate, lobed leaflets. Leaf shape can vary. Leaves and stems are pale green and have short, woolly hairs. Although this species is often overlooked, it can be an agricultural pest and toxic to livestock. It typically grows in areas where little to no other vegetation is growing. Bur buttercup can be managed with an appropriate herbicide in bare ground environments, but remember that it flowers very early in the spring. In other areas, limiting disturbance and nurturing the growth of other vegetation is recommended.

Not to be confused with:

There are over 30 buttercup (*Ranunculus*) species in Montana. Sagebrush buttercup (*Ranunculus glaberrimus*) is native and one of the first wildflowers to bloom, dotting the drab-colored rangeland with a dash of yellow. This species is usually found in dry, open valleys and foothills.

Tall buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*) is a priority 2A noxious weed in Montana that typically grows in moist fields or wet meadows. It grows up to 30" tall and flowers in late May to June.

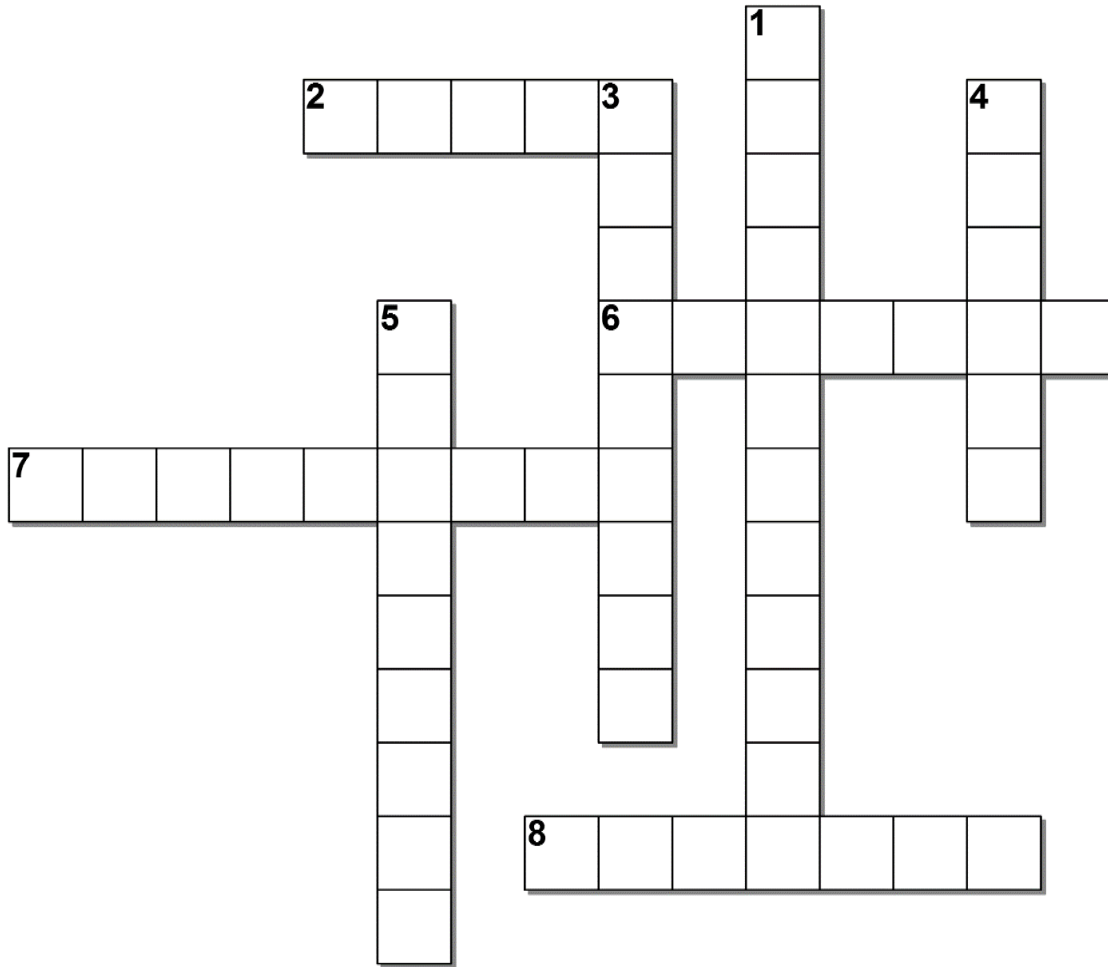


Sagebrush buttercup



Tall buttercup

Word scramble: Test your knowledge of What's up? Buttercup!



Across:

- 2 Describes the short stature of bur buttercup
- 6 Ouch! Description of the texture of seed heads
- 7 Native buttercup that blossoms early in dry, open rangeland
- 8 Alternate early-flowering annual species that is common in disturbed areas

Down:

- 1 Scientific species name for bur buttercup
- 3 Bonus clue, and it's a tough one: Name of object in upper right-hand photo on page 1
- 4 Texture of bur buttercup leaves
- 5 Alternate common name for bur buttercup describing the shape of the beak on the seed

Solutions are posted to the MSU Extension Invasive Rangeland Weed website:

http://msuinvasiveplants.org/extension/monthly_weed_post.html

