

Meadow Buttercup

Ranunculus acris

Plants · In flower May–Aug



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A tall, branching perennial of grassland with deeply divided palmate leaves and glossy golden-yellow five-petalled flowers held well above the foliage on slender stalks. Meadow buttercup is abundant in damp meadows, pasture, verges and rough grassland throughout the Dumfries area, and is the tallest of our common buttercups.

BEHAVIOUR

The petals have a unique structure — a smooth pigmented layer over an air gap — that works like a mirror, giving the intense gloss and genuinely reflecting yellow light onto a chin held beneath. The reflection is thought to help attract pollinators and to warm the flower's centre. The plant is acrid and avoided by grazing stock, which is why it can dominate a heavily grazed field.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Buttercups (Ranunculaceae)
HEIGHT	30–100 cm
STATUS	Native; abundant in grassland

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