

Garden 'weeds'

A series of ID guides to help you discover more of Leicestershire's wonderful wildlife

Most people dismiss 'weeds' as unimportant and annoying plants that must be removed. But look afresh at these species and instead recognise them as wildflowers that are superbly adapted to colonise 'new' habitats. Many have super-charged life-cycles, growing and setting seed quickly and often able to thrive in places with hardly any soil. Others have a different life strategy – to spread vegetatively and try to dominate an area and prevent the competition finding room or light. You have to admire them!

When viewing online, simply click on the species name to find out more.



[Creeping Buttercup – Ranunculus repens](#)

ID: Short & creeping. 3-lobed leaves with indented edges. Golden yellow flowers.

Where: Lawns, cultivated ground, grassland.

Similar: [Bulbous Buttercup](#) (sepals folded down))



[Ivy-leaved Toadflax – Cymbalaria muralis](#)

ID: Trailing stems. Purple flowers. 'Ivy'-shaped leaves.

Where: Walls.

Similar: None.



[Red Deadnettle – Lamium purpureum](#)

ID: Low growing. Oval, blunt-toothed leaves – often with purple tints. Hairy. Pink tubular flowers. No sting!

Where: Gardens, cultivated land.

Similar: [Cut-leaved Dead-nettle](#) (leaves deeply serrated)



[Hairy Bittercress – Cardamine hirsuta](#)

ID: Small. Basal rosette of lobed leaves. White flowers with 4 petals and 4 stamens. Long seed pods.

Where: Bare/cultivated ground, walls.

Similar: [Wavy Bittercress](#) (prefers damp areas, 6 stamens)

Become a citizen scientist! If you can spot any of these species, why not submit your sighting at www.naturespot.org.uk and contribute to our scientific knowledge of local wildlife. Record data submitted by the public is vital to conservation. Simply register online then follow the guidance on the Submit Records page.

Other Leicestershire garden weeds to check out:

[Stinging Nettle](#), [Common Field Speedwell](#), [Herb-Robert](#), [Common Ragwort](#)



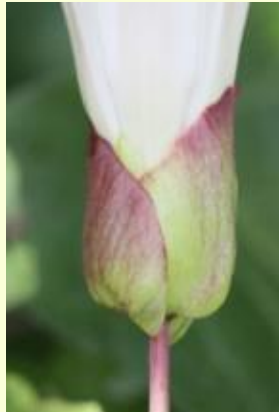
Chickweed – *Stellaria media*

ID: Small. Oval, opposite leaves. Line of hairs on stem. White flowers with 5 petals – each divided to the base.
Where: Cultivated land. Verges.
Similar: Other chickweeds (unlikely in gardens).



Wood Aven – *Geum urbanum*

ID: To 60cm. Yellow flowers. Rounded basal leaves, pointed leaflets up the stem. Spiky fruits. Sometimes called Herb Bennett.
Where: Woods, shady areas, gardens.
Similar: None.



Large Bindweed – *Calystegia silvatica*

ID: Climbing/creeping. Arrow-shaped leaves. White trumpet flowers with overlapping bracts (right).
Where: Gardens, hedges.
Similar: Hedge Bindweed (non-overlapping bracts)



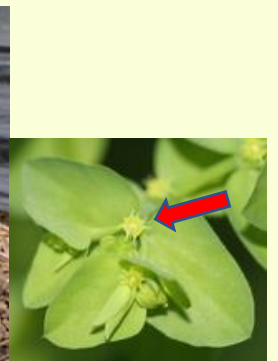
Cleavers – *Galium aparine*

ID: Scrambling, sticky climber. Prickly leaves and seeds. Tiny white flowers (Goose-grass / Sticky Weed).
Where: Gardens, hedges, verges.
Similar: None likely in gardens.



Dandelion – *Taraxacum officinale agg.*

ID: Basal rosette of long leaves with pointed lobes. Bright yellow flowers. White 'hairy' seed head. Milky sap.
Where: Lawns, grassland, verges.
Similar: Autumn Hawkbit (long thin leaf lobes). Cat's-ear (hairy, pimply leaves)



Petty Spurge – *Euphorbia peplus*

ID: Small. Erect and branched stem. Milky sap. Green hidden flowers. Spiky glands (arrowed).
Where: Cultivated land, gardens.
Similar: Sun Spurge (round, unspiked glands).

Find more Leicestershire
Wildlife ID Guides at:
www.naturespot.org.uk/IDguides



**Leicestershire
County Council**



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