

# DNR asks for help finding invasive species

THE JOURNAL STAFF

UPSTATE — The sound of sniffles and the yellow tint on cars and buildings seen through watery eyes are telltale signs spring is upon the Upstate. Trees and plants are blooming, including the ficaria verna — commonly known as fig buttercup — which is invasive.

Not to be confused with the noninvasive packera glabella, or butterweed, there is more to the fig buttercup than meets the eye. Its bright yellow petals contrast against its dark green leaves, and it outshines the native plants that once lived on several Carolina riverbanks.

Surveys from the Department of Plant Industry (DPI) at Clemson University show that colonies of fig buttercup have established themselves along tributaries in two areas of South Carolina. Populations have been seen on tributaries of the Reedy River in Greenville and the Catawba River in Rock Hill, according to DPI, which is charged with protecting South Carolina from foreign plant predators.



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**The fig buttercup, an invasive species with bright yellow flowers that grows among waxy, dark green leaves, has been spotted along tributaries of the Reedy River in Greenville. Any potential spotting of the plant should be reported to [invasives@clemson.edu](mailto:invasives@clemson.edu).**

“Invasive species — plant or animal — disrupt natural conditions by outcompeting native species, creating a cascade of failures from ecosystem processes to loss of indigenous biodiversity,” South Carolina Department of Natural Resources assistant botanist Herrick Brown said. “Not to mention that they can wreak havoc on crops and natural areas managed by SCDNR, resulting in exorbitant costs to control their spread.”

Total removal is almost never possible, Brown said.

Compared to some parts of the country,

infestations in the Southeast are relatively few and far between, thus many people have not yet run across the fig buttercup. The region does, however, have several large infestations, a down payment on what damage can be done along the South’s rivers.

If new populations are discovered, the public should contact the Depart-

ment of Plant Industry immediately, and they will handle treatment or removal of invasive species. To minimize the potential for accidental spread, people should not attempt to remove the plants themselves.

Suspected cases can be reported online at [invasives@clemson.edu](mailto:invasives@clemson.edu) or by calling DPI at (864) 646-2140.