

## June 2015 Plant of the Month



*Chelodanum majus* L., Celandine

The June *Plant of the Month* is one of New Jersey's widespread late spring-early summer non-native forest wild flowers. Celandine is a native of Eurasia, trans-located to North America through trade and stock. Celandine is a member of the Papaveraceae, the poppy family. The vegetative leaves are striking similar to our native celandine poppy, *Stylophorum diphyllum*. The flower size differentiates these two species in the field. Celandine has small petals less than 1 cm. long whereas celandine poppy's petals are greater than 2 cm, both are yellow. The name, according to Gleason and Cronquist (1952), applies to this mono-specific genus is from the Greek chelidon, a swallow from which a second common name, swallowwort, is derived. The plant has an association with this bird since ancient times.

The plant is a member of the established, non-native New Jersey flora. It is a common plant in our urban and suburban influenced rich woodlands north of the fall line (Coastal Plain/Piedmont boundary) and sporadic on the rich soils of the Inner Coastal Plain. Mary Hough (1983) identifies Camden, Cape May and Salem County as know Coastal Plain collection stations. My personal experience identifies Mercer, Monmouth, Burlington and Gloucester Counties as additional locations for this poppy.

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