

# Floating Pennywort

## Species Description

**Scientific name:** *Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*

**AKA:** Dail-ceiniog arnofiol (Welsh), *Hydrocotyle nova zealandiae*

**Native to:** North America

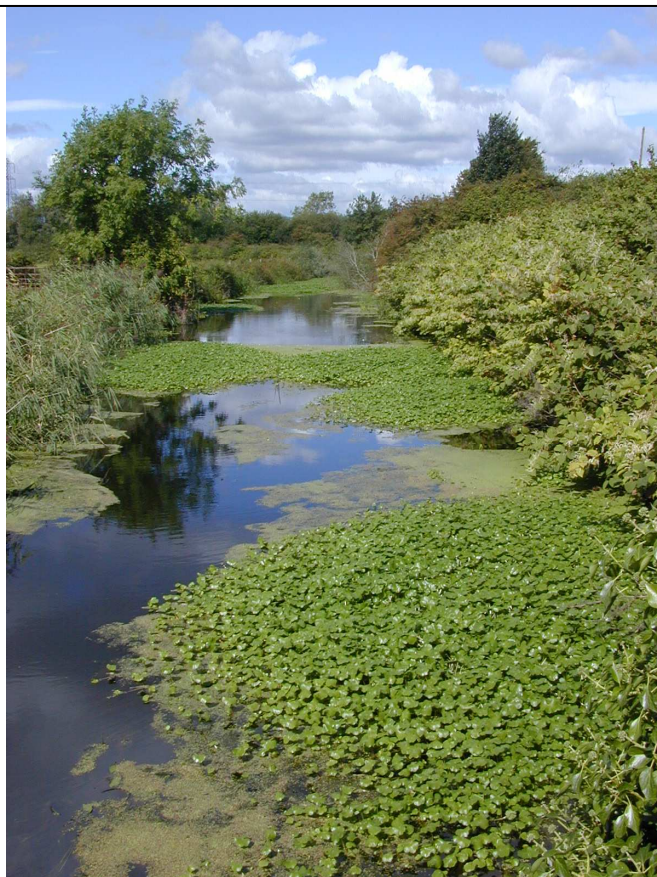
**Habitat:** Emergent or floating on the surface of still or slowly moving freshwater

Free-floating or rooted. The characteristic leaves and growth form help to make this plant easy to identify. It is found mostly in the south-east of England and occasionally in the north-west of England and Wales. Spreading rapidly.

First naturalised in 1990 as a result of discarded plants from garden ponds. Can grow up to 20cm per day and may quickly dominate a waterbody forming thick mats and impeding water flow and amenity use. May out-compete native species by blocking out light, causing deoxygenation, obstructing air breathing insects from reaching the water surface and reducing water temperatures.

Floating pennywort is listed under Schedule 9 to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 with respect to England, Wales and Scotland. As such, it is an offence to plant or otherwise cause this species to grow in the wild.

For details of legislation go to [www.nonnativespecies.org/legislation](http://www.nonnativespecies.org/legislation).



## Key ID Features

Grows horizontally

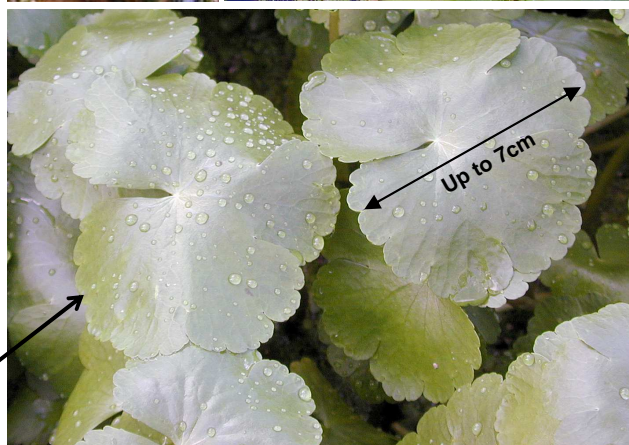


Leaves can be floating or emergent



Fine roots

Fleshy stalks



Up to 7cm

Shiny, kidney-shaped leaves with crinkled edge, frequently broader than long



# Identification throughout the year

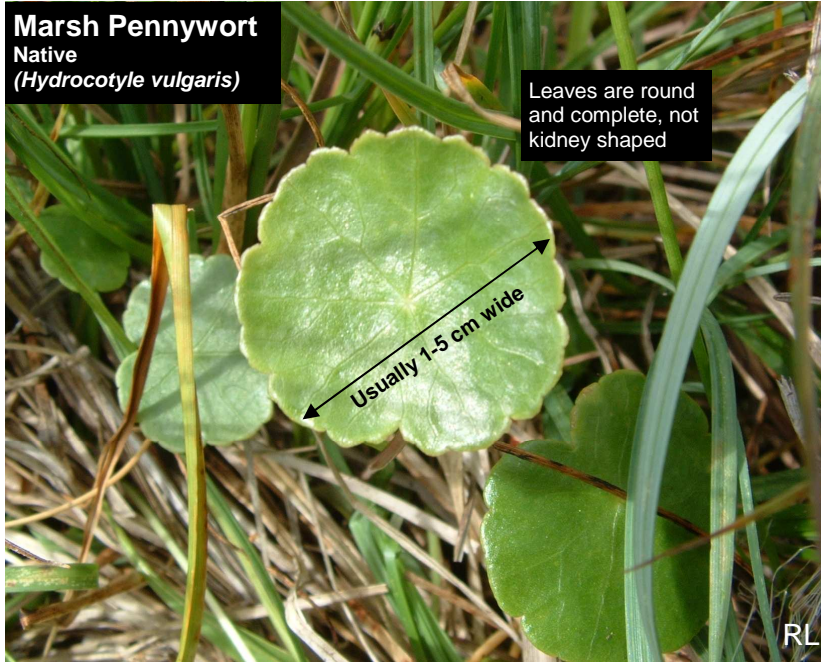
Varies little throughout the year, although in the winter it is most likely to be found at the water's edge. Tiny white flowers are rare, but if present, they appear between July and August.

# Distribution

Common in the south-east of England, and spreading to other parts of the British Isles.

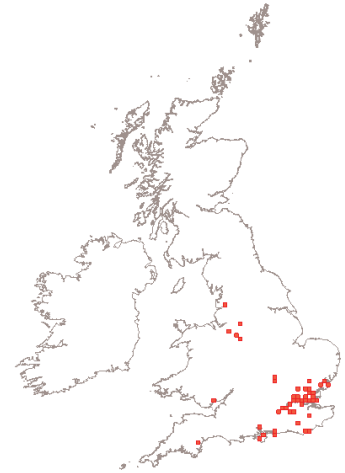
# Similar Species

**Marsh Pennywort**  
Native  
(*Hydrocotyle vulgaris*)



Grows on damp ground in bogs and fens. Always rooted in the ground, never free-floating

Source: NBN Gateway. Check website for current distribution

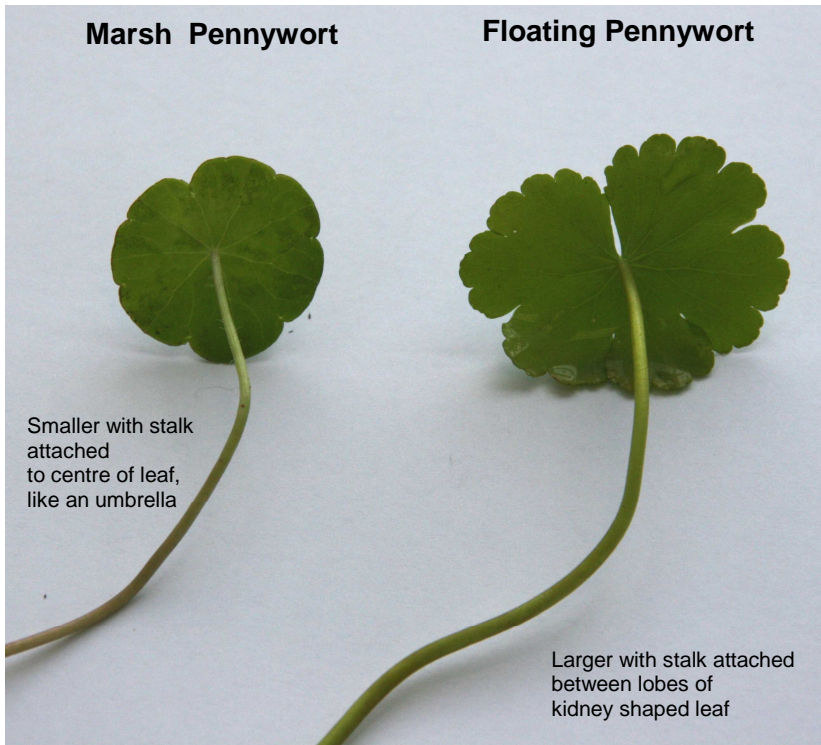


**Floating Pennywort** can form dense mats that need to be physically removed



**Marsh Pennywort**

**Floating Pennywort**



Smaller with stalk attached to centre of leaf, like an umbrella

Larger with stalk attached between lobes of kidney shaped leaf

### References and further reading:

Blamey, M, Fitter, R and Fitter, A (2003) *"The Wild Flowers of Britain and Ireland. The Complete Guide to the British and Irish Flora."* A & C Black

Preston, C D and Croft, J M (1997) *"Aquatic plants in Britain and Ireland"*. Harley Books

Preston, C D, Pearman D A and Dines, T A (editors) (2002) *"New Atlas of the British and Irish Flora"*. Oxford University Press

Stace, C (1999) *"Field Flora of the British Isles"*. Cambridge University Press