**Oxalis pes-caprae (bermuda buttercup)**

Perennial herb with bulbils, sour-tasting stalks, clover-like leaves and yellow flowers.

**Scientific name:** *Oxalis pes-caprae* L.

**Common names:** bermuda buttercup, buttercup oxalis, soursox

**Family:** Oxalidaceae

**Status in Portugal:** invasive species (listed in the annex I of Decreto-Lei nº 565/99, 21 December)

**Risk Assessment score:** (in development)

**Last update:** 11/07/2014

**How to recognise it**

Perennial herb up to 40 cm, without aerial stems, with a deeply buried bulb emitting an annual stem, ascending, subterraneous, provided with bulbils and a foliar rosette on the surface of the soil.

**Leaves:** with long petioles, up to 17 cm, thin, with a sour taste, 3 leaflets with 10-22 x 19-41 mm, oblanceolate.

**Flowers:** yellow, sometimes folded, with 13-26 mm, arranged in inflorescences similar to umbels with 4-19 flowers.

**Fruits:** ovoid capsules that rarely mature.

**Flowering:** January to April.

**Similar species**

*Oxalis corniculata* L. (creeping wood sorrel), also with a yellow flower, has some similarity but has aerial
stems that are well developed, so they cannot be confused.

**Characteristics that aid invasion**

It propagates vegetatively, by bulbils. *Oxalis pes-caprae* produces many bulbils that fragment easily and are the main mean of dispersion. It rapidly augments its distribution originating extensive areas where it dominates.

**ORIGIN AND DISTRIBUTION**

**Native distribution area**

South Africa (Cape region).

**Distribution in Portugal**

Mainland Portugal (all provinces), Azores archipelago (all islands), Madeira archipelago (Madeira and Porto Santo islands).

**Other places where the species is invasive**

Mediterranean Europe, western USA (California), Asia, South Africa, New Zealand, Australia, South America.

**Introduction reasons**

Probably for ornamental purposes.

**Preferential invasion environments**

Crop lands and wastelands, mainly in silted soils.

It doesn't tolerate frost and low temperatures very well, ending up by drying the aerial part in those conditions.

It is more frequent as a weed of agriculture, but it also invades natural areas, where it competes with the native species.

**IMPACTS**

**Impacts on ecosystems**

It forms dense mats that may inhibit the development of native vegetation.

**Economic impacts**

It reduces productivity in crop fields.

**CONTROL**

Controlling an invasive species demands a well-planned management, which includes the determination of the invaded area, identifying the causes of invasion, assessing the impacts, defining the intervention priorities, selecting the adequate control methodologies and their application. Afterwards it is fundamental to monitor the efficiency of the methodologies and recuperation of the intervened area as
Oxalis pes-caprae (bermuda buttercup)

to perform, whenever necessary, the follow-up control.

The control methodologies used for Oxalis pes-caprae include:

**Physical control**

**Hand pulling** (preferential methodology). It is applied to plants of all sizes. In more compacted substrates, hand pulling must be made during the rainy as to facilitate the removal of the bulbils. As much as possible, it should be guaranteed that there are no bulbils left in the ground so that there may not be a reinvasion. Frequent hand pulling should be done, before there is time for new bulbils to form, so the plant ends up weakening.

**Soil solarisation.** It’s an alternative to hand pulling, mainly in extensive areas that are invaded by the species. It should be guaranteed that no native species are affected.

**Chemical control**

**Foliar application of herbicide.** Spray with herbicide (active substance: glyphosate), limiting its application to the target species. The herbicide application should be done before flowering.

For additional information, visit the webpage [www.invasoras.pt](http://www.invasoras.pt) and/or contact us at invader@uc.pt.

**REFERENCES**


