



The Pennywort Project

Eradicating floating pennywort from the Upper Cam



Floating Pennywort, August © Mike Foley

The invasive weed Floating Pennywort (*Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*) is becoming a major problem on the Cam and Ouse. It grows rapidly (up to 20cm/day in summer) from tiny fragments of stem which drift down the river then grow into large rafts that float on the water and block the river.

The Environment Agency advises that the best way of eradicating it is by a combination of volunteers pulling out the small strands and carefully disposing of them, supplemented by mechanical clearance of the large rafts.

The Pennywort Project is a community led project to eradicate it from the Upper Cam. It is coordinated by Cam Valley Forum and supported by volunteers, community groups, landowners, agencies, councils and businesses. We are also providing help and advice to those caring for other rivers.

Pennywort Pulling

Experts recommend the following:

Pulling pennywort: Pennywort floats on the water, and small strands can easily be pulled out by hand or rake. If it has taken root in the bank, the root should be gently dug out.

Disposal: Pennywort can be left on the bank somewhere dry, and it will die. This should be several meters from the water and dry, where cattle, pedestrians or the wind won't spread it back into the water. Great care should be taken not to contaminate neighbouring ditches or damp places.

Don't shred it, don't spread it: even a 1cm length of stem floating down the river will be enough to grow into a new patch, so it's important to remove patches cleanly. Where fragments are drifting in the water, a small net or springbok rake can be useful for collecting them. Where rafts are too big to be lifted safely, inform the relevant Agency and leave them to be dealt with by mechanical means.

All gear must be cleaned (eg rakes, nets, boats) especially before going to other river systems

Staying safe: Pennywort is safe to handle, but working near a river is hazardous, and working alone is potentially dangerous, so stay within your comfort zone. If you wish to help, you are encouraged to join a working party first.

Further information from <https://camvalleyforum.uk/>

Identification guide for beginners

Floating Pennywort



Other common local plants, growing in or near water



Azolla / Water Fern



Brook lime



Water Lilly



Buttercup



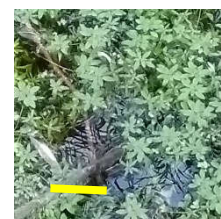
Watercress



Marsh Pennywort



Ground Ivy



Water Starwort