

## **K. Sulfur Cinquefoil** (*Potentilla recta*)

### **Key Characteristics:**

Sulfur Cinquefoil is a member of the Rose family. It is a long-lived, tap-rooted perennial that grows upright to 1-2 ft tall, with hairy stems. **Flowers** are light-yellow in color with a dark yellow center and 5 petals. **Leaves** are palmate and divided into about five saw-toothed leaflets.

### **Locations:**

Although not a new discovery in Pitkin County (it's been around at least eight years) Sulfur Cinquefoil is new to the Pitkin County Weed List. Small patches have been found at the Pitkin County Airport and east of Aspen around North Star, in Woody Creek near Jaffee Park, on the Child Ranch on Capitol Creek Road, up the Frying Pan, and in the Crystal River Valley at the Penny Hot Springs and Filoha Meadows. It is very important to report any sightings of this weed to the County Land Manager, so that it can be treated immediately and not allowed to spread any further.

### **Biological control:**

Insect species have been used in trials, but since Sulfur cinquefoil is similar to strawberries, the insects used are considered pests. For more information, contact the Colorado Department of Agriculture's Insectary in Palisade, Colorado at 970-464-7916. Note that biological control will not eradicate a weed.

### **Cultural control:**

The only recommendation available for preventing the spread of this species is by eliminating seed production from established stands, and discontinuing its use as an ornamental.

### **Mechanical control:**

Mowing is not effective, as new shoots will replace the cut stems. Hand-digging or pulling when soil is moist is effective on small infestations, if the entire root system is removed. Tillage alone will spread the infestation, since root fragments will produce new plants.

### **Chemical control:**

Contact the Pitkin County Land Management Department for more specific information about herbicide products, application rates, and equipment calibration.



## K. Sulfur Cinquefoil (*Potentilla recta*) (continued)

### Look-Alikes:

There are over 20 native species of Cinquefoil (*Potentilla*) in Colorado. Many can be easily confused with the noxious weed Sulfur Cinquefoil. They all have yellow, 5-petaled flowers, and most are herbaceous plants with a creeping or upright growth habit. The exception are the Shrubby Cinquefoils, (e.g. *P. fruticosa*) which are small, round bushes with yellow flowers, commonly used in landscaping. There are three major ways to distinguish the native plants from the noxious weed:

- **Flower Color:** Native Cinquefoils typically have bright yellow blooms, while the flowers of Sulfur Cinquefoil are usually a paler yellow.
- **Stem Hairs:** Sulfur cinquefoil has long right-angled hairs that are perpendicular to the leaf-stalks and the stem. (hence the species name *P. recta*) While the natives may have hairy stems, these hairs do not stand straight out.
- **Leaf Color:** The underside of the leaves of native Cinquefoils are typically silvery-grey



**Beautiful Cinquefoil**  
(*Potentilla pulcherrima*)

Note bright yellow flowers and prostrate growth habit (left), as well as silvery leaf underside (right).  
(Sulfur Cinquefoil is erect with pale yellow flowers and a leaf that is dark green on both sides)

and often hairy, while Sulfur cinquefoil leaves are dark green on both sides.



**Shrubby Cinquefoil**  
(*Potentilla fruticosa*)

Note its woody, shrub-like growth habit, bright yellow flowers, and small, narrow leaves.

(Sulfur Cinquefoil is herbaceous and pale yellow flowers and large, palmately compound leaves.)