

Lotus corniculatus L., BIRDFOOT TREFOIL, BIRD'S FOOT TREFOIL. Perennial herb, woody-taprooted, many-stemmed at base, with long main shoots and branched throughout, procumbent or decumbent to ascending, 12–70 cm tall; shoots with only cauline leaves, leaflets bluish green, \pm short-strigose to glabrate. **Stems:** \pm 5-angled, to 1.5 mm diameter, tough. **Leaves:** helically alternate, odd-pinnately compound (5-foliolate) with 2 basal leaflets at base of rachis resembling stipules, sessile, with inconspicuous stipules; stipules 2, next to basal petiolules, minute, glandlike, reddish; rachis channeled, 3–4 mm long, hairy at tip; petiolules pulvinuslike, \pm 0.5 mm long; blades of leaflets linear or narrowly lanceolate to oblanceolate or narrowly obovate, 5–20 \times 1.5–4 mm, dull green, entire, acute at tip, pinnately veined but with lateral veins \pm inconspicuous, often glabrescent at maturity, often glaucous. **Inflorescence:** umbel (condensed raceme), axillary, 3–6(–8)-flowered, formed on a long peduncle, bracteate, soft-hairy; peduncle \gg leaf, to 95 mm long, angular becoming somewhat cylindric, short-strigose to glabrate, with tuft of hairs around base of each pedicel; bract at tip of peduncle leaflike, (2–)3-foliolate, sessile with leaflets having short petiolules; bractlet subtending pedicel minutely triangular with swollen base, arranged in a ring, with red tip and a tuft of hairs; pedicel 1–1.5 mm long, often bent (recurved) just below calyx, short-hairy aging glabrescent. **Flower:** bisexual, bilateral, pealike (papilionaceous), 6–7(–9) mm across, 8–10(–11) mm long, arching upward; **nectary** nectar-producing receptacle below ovary, green, nectar copious, thin; **calyx** 5-lobed; tube narrowly bell-shaped, \pm 3 mm long, pale green, 5-veined becoming 10-ribbed in fruit; lobes unequal to subequal, long-acuminate or triangular, 1–2.5 mm long, green with light margins, sparsely hairy or inconspicuously ciliate to glabrous, ascending and not spreading in bud; **petals** 5, light yellow at base and bright yellow above; banner \pm obovate (base technically not clawlike), ca. 9 \times 5.5–6 mm, with radiating, fine red veins, lower portion wedge-shaped, 4 mm long with margins inrolled, limb folded and bent upward at midpoint, at anthesis with spreading margins, sometimes reddish orange on back; wings 2, clawed, claw linear, \pm 2.5 mm long, limb obovate, 7–8 mm long (including claw), large-lobed on upper margin at base; keel of 2 petals fully fused along lower edge, clawed, claws linear, ca. 2 mm long, limb broadly and conspicuously sickle-shaped, \pm = wing, light yellow with glossy yellow 1/4–1/3 at tip; **stamens** 10, diadelphous (9 filaments fused + 1 free), dimorphic with alternating short and longer stamens in sheet; filaments sheet 3.5–4.5 mm long, filament free portions ca. 1.5 mm and at tip narrower than anthers (short stamens) and ca. 3 mm and at tip wider than anthers (longer stamens), greenish white or white; anthers basifixed, dithecal, $<$ 0.5 mm long, orangey, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen white, copious, sticky; **pistil** 1, $>$ stamens, stalked (stipe), stipe to 0.4 mm long; ovary superior, cylindric, 4–5 \times 0.5 mm, green, glabrous, 1-chambered with ca. 30 ovules attached to upper side; style bent upward near end of filament sheet, 3.5–4.5 mm long, white, tuft of hairs below stigma absent; stigma minutely discoid-capitate. **Fruit:** legume (pod), dehiscent by 2 twisting valves, several–many-seeded (often with numerous aborted seeds), straight-cylindric, 15–25(–35) \times 2–2.5 mm (including beak to 5 mm long), light brown. **Seed:** oblong-rounded, 1.2–1.5 \times 1–1.2 mm, dull brown slightly mottled and with black specks, smooth (aborted seeds monotone dark green with shrunken sides); hilum lateral above midpoint, circular, \pm 0.15 mm, sunken. Mid-May–early August.

Naturalized. A spreading, decumbent perennial herb with showy clusters of bright yellow flowers, infrequently encountered at disturbed sites in SMM and SH, typically along service roads and trails or on margins of pastures. Leaves of *Lotus corniculatus* typically have five leaflets but having the first pair at the base, hence resembling leaflike stipules; however, at the base of each basal leaf petiolule are the actual stipules, minute, red, glandlike, and easily overlooked. It has showy clusters of typically five or six bright yellow flowers, and is easily distinguished from the rhizomatous *L. uliginosus*, which may occur in range and also very showy flowers, but instead has eight or more flowers per inflorescence.

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