

Velvetleaf

Abutilon theophrasti Medic.

Mallow Family

Key identifying traits

- ❑ Large (3-8 inch wide) heart shaped leaves grow alternately on long slender stalks
- ❑ Entire plant is soft with short velvety hairs
- ❑ Yellow to yellow-orange 5-petal flowers; $\frac{1}{2}$ -1 inch wide, solitary generally in upper leaf axils
- ❑ 1-8 feet tall, rather linear in appearance with branching occurring in upper portion of plant
- ❑ Distinctive circular cluster of 12-15 seed pods produce purplish brown, kidney shaped seeds



Biology and ecology

- Tap rooted, summer annual reproducing by seed
- Does not tolerate frost
- 700-17,000 hard-coated seeds per plant remain viable when buried for more than 50 years
- Native to Asia where fiber is used to make rope, bags, nets and paper-introduced in North America in 1700's as a potential fiber crop
- Serious row crop (corn/soybeans) weed in the mid-West
- Found infrequently in gardens, along fencelines and roadsides throughout Washington
- Leaves are horizontal by day, changing to nearly vertical at night



Control

Prevention - Learn to identify plants; know your property; beware of contaminated vegetable seeds and feed screenings

Biological - Some active in mid-West

Cultural - Healthy established vegetation helps, but plants can produce seed under shade of a cover crop

Mechanical - Pulling, digging and cultivating prior to bloom will kill plants; burn plants with seed pods-even immature pods will ripen after cutting

Chemical - Several are reported to control the plant but no specific data available in Pacific Northwest



Where found – Known to occur only as single plants found in gardens in Stevens County