



VELVETLEAF

Abutilon theophrasti



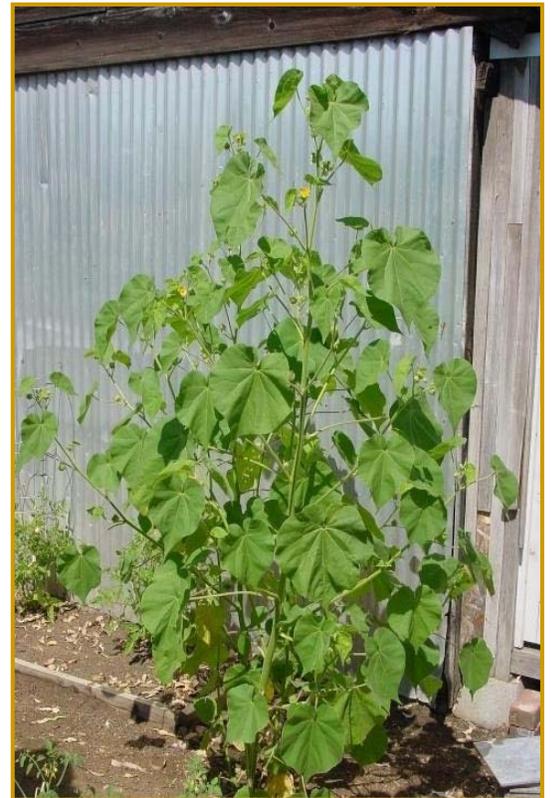
Virginia Tech Weed ID Guide

- * Other names: Indian mallow, butterprint, buttonweed
- * Velvetleaf is a Class A noxious weed.
- * Velvetleaf is a summer annual from the Malvaceae Family and spreads by seed.
- * The entire plant is velvety and soft and is completely covered with short fine hairs. It can reach heights of 3 to 8 feet. It has alternate heart shaped leaves, usually 2 to 5 inches wide at the base and a slender petiole supports each leaf. The flowers are yellow to yellow-orange and about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch wide with 5 sepals and 5 petals per flower. Flowers are solitary, or in small clusters and are on short stalks in upper leaf axils.

- * Velvetleaf is found in waste areas, roadsides, vacant lots, fence rows, and around farmsteads, in cultivated fields and gardens.
- * It reproduces by seed; each plant produces up to 17,000 seeds per year which remain viable for 50 to 60 years and also remains viable after passing through an animal's digestive track. Velvetleaf is self compatible, so a single plant can pollinate itself and start a new infestation. New flowers appear every 2 days and the flower is usually fertilized the day it opens, seeds mature in 17 to 22 days after pollination.

CONTROL OPTIONS

- * Fortunately for Washington, Velvetleaf is not very widespread, and can be easily controlled when it is still in small numbers and plants are young, before flower production. This annual plant is easy to pull out, roots and all. Plant materials should be bagged up and disposed of in the garbage, since the seeds will ripen after the plant is pulled.
- * Prevention of a seed bank is essential for controlling Velvetleaf. Above all else, prevent plants from going to seed. In the 80's hundreds of millions of dollars were spent on control of this plant in the U.S., because of the economic impact to crop production losses in cultivated lands. It causes the most concern in row crops, since it out-competes the strongest cultivated plants for water and soil nutrients.



- ✦ Mowing is also an effective strategy, if mowed prior to seed production.
- ✦ 2, 4 D, plus Dicamba (as in Weedmaster) is a good post emergent selective herbicide for control of Velvetleaf. It should be applied while the plant is actively growing and before seed production.
- ✦ When using herbicides, always read and follow all label instructions and obey all label precautions. (Note: pesticide product registration is renewed annually and product names and formulations may vary from year to year.)

