

# Velvetleaf

*Abutilon theophrasti*

Detect this pest plant before it becomes a problem

## Why it's a problem:

Velvetleaf is a recent incursion to New Zealand.

- It aggressively competes with crops for nutrients and water.
- Seedlings are vigorous and the plants grow rapidly in the first few months after germination.
- It is regarded as the worst cropping weed in the United States, so could be detrimental to farming practices if it established in the region.

## Appearance:

- Typically an aggressive, annual, broad-leaved herb that grows 1-2.5m tall.
- At one Wairarapa sheep and beef farm, all mature plants (bearing flowers) found were at a height of 20-30cm.
- Its buttery-yellow flowers occur in spring to autumn, producing a capsule that consists of a cup-like ring formed by 12-15 woody segments, and is about 2.5cm in diameter.
- Leaves are large and heart-shaped and velvety to touch.

## Location:

It is most likely to be found in arable crops.

## Get more information:

- [Weedbusters](#) provides descriptions and images to help with pest identification.
- [Agpest](#) is an identification tool for pests, biology, impact and management for farmers and agricultural professionals.
- [iNaturalist](#) is a sharing tool that contributes to biodiversity science for avid nature observers.
- Manaaki Whenua – [Landcare Research](#) provides information on weeds and biocontrol
- [Ministry for Primary Industries](#) (MPI) for information on protecting New Zealand from biological risk.
- Practice [biosecurity hygiene](#) to stop the spreading of pests.

