

Weed of The Week

Common Mallow (*Malva neglecta*)

This weed is sometimes referred to as cheese mallow, cheese weed, or dwarf mallow. It is a winter annual broadleaf weed though it can be a biennial in favorable weather. Mature plants often stay green throughout the winter season. Common mallow is a low-growing matted plant that grows anywhere from 4 inches to 2 feet in height. It has a deep-branched taproot that allows it to survive over winter. Leaves of common mallow are round with a crenate margin (rounded teeth). They have alternate placement on long petioles. The leaves and stems have short hairs that give this weed a rough texture. Fruits are capsules that resemble a button or cheese wheel. Flowers are pale lavender to white in color with 5 petals and purple veins. Common mallow is often mistaken for ground ivy; however, ground ivy has a distinct mint scent when cut, and square stems, and the leaves are opposite with more rounded edges.

Common mallow is an issue in turfgrass and landscape beds as well as low-maintenance areas. Due to its long taproot, it can be difficult to fully remove by hand without the use of a tool. Hand pulling or hoeing can be an effective method of physically removing the plant when it is young and the taproot is shorter. Pre-emergent herbicides include: flumioxazin (SureGuard), oxyfluorfen (Goal, nursery only), oxyfluorfen+trifluralin (Harrel's 75), and oxadiazon (Ronstar). For post-emergence, mixtures of 2,4-D, dicamba, MCPP, or MCPA should provide adequate control. Products that contain triclopyr, fluroxypyr, and quinclorac as one of the ingredients in a two- or three-combination herbicide will also work.

