



Weed of The Week

Common Mullen (*Verbascum thapsus*.)

No, it is not tobacco, this week's weed of the week features a weed that often gets the name of Indian tobacco due to its resemblance in growth. Common Mullen is a part of the Figwort family and is native to Eurasia, brought to the United States around the early 1800's by European immigrants. This weed can be found growing throughout most of Ohio and commonly along roadsides, fence rows, and pastures. Common Mullen prefers rocky and well drained soils. Being a biennial, this weed has two main growing years. The first year is spent establishing and growing a rosette and the second year the plant will bolt and produce a flower and seed. Common Mullen's main source of reproduction is by seed production and will produce small yellow flowers congregated tightly on a rod-shaped stem. Plant height can reach as tall as 8' in height and produces a very deep-rooted tap root. Common Mullen can be easily identified by its light lime green colored leaves covered with fine hair. These hairy leaves can cause skin dermatitis to both livestock and humans. The foliage and seed have also been known to cause a mild narcotic effect of sleeping if consumed. Herbicides such as 2-4-D, glyphosate and dicamba can be very effective when applied at the rosette stage of growth. Mowing in year # 2 before flower development is also effective in reducing population. There are also different types of insects that can serve as biological concerns.

