

## Project title

Velvetleaf Biosecurity

## Location

South Otago and Southland

## Project overview

Supporting farmers on the management of velvetleaf

# Supporting Farmers through Community Outreach

SLWP has been working with South Otago and Southland farmers, and the Ministry of Primary Industry (MPI) since 2018 on the management of velvetleaf. Velvetleaf is one of the world's most invasive pest plants. In 2015/2016 it was introduced across the country in contaminated fodder beet seed.

SLWP's work is focused on community engagement both with affected landowners/managers and the wider agricultural community. This work includes the distribution of guidelines for how to best manage fodder beet crops while minimising the risk of velvetleaf spread and creating velvetleaf awareness across the wider agricultural community. The focus, more recently, has shifted focus to those farms identified as high risk during previous seasons since the velvet leaf incursion.

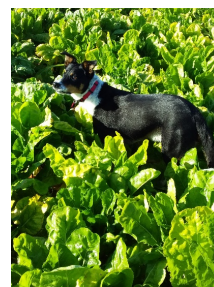
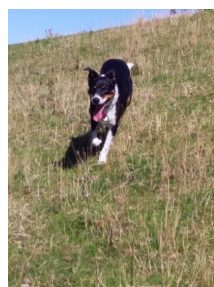
While there have been no reports of velvetleaf being found in Southland and South Otago since the original incursion as finds in other regions have shown, the seeds can remain dormant and germinate at any time (up to 50 years later). Meaning velvetleaf awareness is as important now as it was in 2015/2016 when velvetleaf plants were found across the country.

## Velvetleaf - Farm Management Plans

SLWP have worked with farmers who planted contaminated seed, to help develop targeted management plans for those properties. These farm plans outline Biosecurity requirements and ongoing responsibilities for velvetleaf management. Using best biosecurity practices on farm will assist in protecting your farm from the risks posed by velvetleaf.

## Dog Detection

We've also used Southland's very own detector dogs to help locate velvetleaf.



## The Importance of Biosecurity good practice:

Good on farm biosecurity is important for both the protection of your farming operation and the environment more generally. It is very important you are aware of what is coming onto your property and what is potentially leaving your property for example leaving in crops or baleage.

Here at SLWP we can work with you to identify biosecurity risks and help you put in place practices to minimise your biosecurity risk. If you are interested in learning how we can help you get in contact today.

## Velvetleaf – all about this pest plant?

Velvetleaf is an annual broad-leaved weed that grows between 0.5m and 2.5m tall.

- It has buttery-yellow flowers about 3cm across. It flowers from spring through autumn.
- Leaves are large and heart-shaped and are velvety to the touch.
  - The plant has distinctive seedpods with 12 to 15 segments in a cup-like ring. Each seedpod is about 2.5cm in diameter
- Seeds can remain dormant in the ground for over 60 years, and a single plant can drop up to 30,000 seeds. It is important to spot plants early, as velvetleaf is difficult to control.
- Velvetleaf (*Abutilon theophrasti*) is an unwanted organism in New Zealand, under the Biosecurity Act 1993, meaning you cannot move it, including any crop with a seeded velvetleaf plant present.
- Velvetleaf is one of the world's worst cropping weeds causing massive yield loss by competing for water, space and nutrients.
- You need to find and dispose of any velvetleaf plants on your property, it is important to remove plants before they seed.
- More information on how to control velvetleaf can be found here:  
<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/biosecurity/long-term-biosecurity-management-programmes/velvetleaf/how-to-control-velvetleaf/>
- Report it - pest and disease hotline (0800 80 99 66).