

BROADLEAF WEEDS

TITLE:	VIRGINIA COPPERLEAF (also known as Three-seeded Mercury)
LATIN NAME:	<i>Acalypha virginica</i>
FAMILY:	Euphorbiaceae
OVERALL DESCRIPTION:	
A summer annual broadleaf weed in the Spurge family that can grow to three feet tall. It is found in disturbed areas, meadows, fields, woodlands and shores of rivers and lakes from Maine to Florida, west to South Dakota, and Texas.	
LIFE CYCLE	Annual
SEASONS OF GROWTH	Summer/Fall
FLOWERS / SEEDHEAD	Male and female flowers are produced separately on the same plant. Both flower types are inconspicuous, greenish, and produced in clusters in the leaf axils on the upper stem. Female flowers are surrounded by conspicuous, bracts that have 9 to 15 deep lobes.
LEAF SHAPE	Lanceolate/Rhomboidal
LEAF EDGES	Crenate/ Serrate
LEAF ARRANGEMENT	Upper leaves: Alternate Lowest leaves: Opposite
GROWTH HABIT	Young leaves are brown/copper and grow closer together at the top of the stem, giving the plant a flat-topped look.
FULL LEAF SIZE	1 to 3 inches long, < 1 inch wide
STEM CHARACTERISTICS	Unbranched, erect stems are light to medium green, terete (cylindrical or slightly tapering, without substantial ridges or furrows), and moderately covered with hairs. Only member of spurge family to not exude sap.
ROOT	A taproot with secondary fibrous root system.
ANY OTHER DISTINGUISHING TRAITS	Native to eastern US; not invasive and can be managed by hand weeding and then mulching. It is resistant to drought and attractive to songbirds who eat the seeds in fall and winter. Deer browse its leaves. It is mildly poisonous to humans if ingested, causing vomiting, diarrhea, or dermatitis. The sap can cause contact dermatitis.



Photo: North Carolina State University



Photo: Matt Rung (CCBY-NC 4.0)



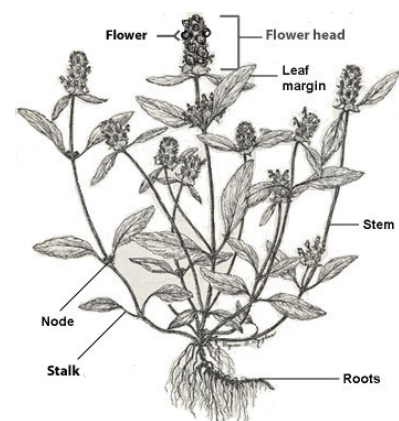
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Photo: Shawn Askew,
Virginia Tech



**COMMON TYPICAL BROADLEAF WEED
STRUCTURE**

TYPE OF SOIL CONDITIONS OR PRACTICES FAVORING GROWTH	Will grow in disturbed, dry or moist soil of meadows, fields, woodlands and shores of rivers or lakes. As with many annual plants, it may be wind-pollinated or carried by birds. It will thrive in full sun.
KEY MESSAGE TO HOMEOWNER	Common in poorly managed turfgrass. Hand-pull existing plants. Mulch for prevention in beds. Wear gloves when pulling, as it can cause contact dermatitis.
CULTURAL CONTROL	Can be pulled with hand weeding. Although the weed has a taproot, it is easily pulled up for control.
BIOLOGICAL CONTROL	None
CHEMICAL CONTROL	None noted in Virginia Cooperative Extension Pest Management Guide.
SOURCES OF INFORMATION	<p>North Carolina Extension Gardener Plant Toolbox https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/acalypha-virginica/</p> <p>University of Missouri, Division of Plant Sciences, Virginia Copperleaf https://weedid.missouri.edu/weedinfo.cfm?weed_id=3</p> <p>Texas A&M, Agrilife Extension, Aggie Turf https://aggieturf.tamu.edu/turfgrass-weeds/virginia-copperleaf/</p> <p>Oklahoma State University, Department of Plant and Soil Sciences http://plantid.okstate.edu/weeds/acalypha-virginica-virginia-copperleaf/</p> <p>Virginia Tech, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Weed Identification, Virginia Copperleaf https://weedid.cals.vt.edu/profile/660</p>
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