



A Northern Nevada Homeowner's Guide to Identifying and Managing Common Mallow

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Other common names: Mallow, little mallow, cheeseweed, buttonweed

Scientific name: *Malva neglecta*

Family: Malvaceae

Description: Mallow grows in a rounded, bushy or spreading plant with tough stems and a deep taproot.

Leaves: Hairy geranium-shaped leaves attach to the stem with a petiole (stalk). Leaves have 5 to 7 shallow lobes with round teeth and veins that radiate out from the base.

Flowers: Small (about 2/5 of an inch in diameter), white to pale pink or lavender-striped and not very noticeable. Flowers have 5 petals with crinkly edges. Blooms from summer to fall.

Fruit: Looks like a miniature cheese wheel with wedge-shaped sections.

Roots: Grows a large, tough taproot.

Native to: Europe

Where it grows: Lawns, gardens, parks, roadsides, pastures and other disturbed or unmanaged sites

Life cycle: Winter annual (sprouts in the fall to early winter) to short-lived perennial (grows back each year from the roots)

Reproduction: Reproduces by seed



Typical plant growing in a lawn.
(Photo by S. Donaldson)



The second set of seedling leaves have the characteristic geranium shape.
(Photo by W. Hanson Mazet)

Control methods: Common mallow is best controlled when young. Mature plants are difficult to remove mechanically due to the large taproot.

Mechanical: Dig, hoe or pull young plants.

Plants that are mowed or break off at the crown will regrow. The tough taproot makes pulling mature plants difficult, if not impossible.

Cultural: Thick mulches can help prevent seed germination. Plant desirable vegetation that will shade the area and reduce germination and growth of young plants. Keep turf healthy and vigorous to compete with the weed.

Biological: None commercially available.

Mallow may concentrate nitrates to levels that can be toxic to cattle.

Chemical: Try broadleaf-selective herbicides on very young plants. Pre-emergence herbicides can be used to manage existing seed banks. Glyphosate is generally not effective on this plant.

References:

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- Wilens, A. 2007. Mallows. UC Davis ANR Publication #74127, <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PDF/PESTNOTES/pnmallows.pdf>.
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The young plant has a well-developed taproot.



The flower is small and has five petals.



The fruit looks like a wrapped wheel of cheese.

(Above 3 photos by S. Donaldson)

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