

Common Name: Common Mullein

Scientific Name: *Verbascum thapsus*

Family: *Scrophulariaceae*

Alternative Names: Great Mullein, Aaron's Rod, Adam's Flannel, Our Lady's Candle.

Range: Throughout British Isles

Habitat: Generally on open ground in disturbed soil

Key Identification Features: Biennial up to 2 m tall. Large pale green-grey, woolly, oval or elliptical leaves with winged stalks arranged in a basal rosette in first year. Flower spike in second year ends in a densely packed terminal spike occasionally with smaller side spikes. Flowers yellow with 5 petals. Fruit is oval capsule.

Confusion Species: Other species of Mullein all look similar. Dark Mullein *V. nigrum* is smaller and has an angled rather than round stem and the leaves are dark above. White Mullein *V. lychnitis* also has an angled stem, with shorter, darker leaves which are hairless on their upper surface. Moth Mullein *V. blattaria* is hairless and Hoary Mullein *V. pulverulentum* is similar to Common Mullein but the leaves have more heart shaped lobes at the base and the mealy wool on the leaves is easily rubbed off, also the flower spike many branched to form a pyramid shape.

Edible Uses:

Medicinal Uses: Contains mucilage, saponins, bitter glycosides including aucubin. The flowers can either be used as an infusion for sore throats or as a tincture for dry and chronic coughs. The leaves can be used in a similar way and have also been smoked for asthma and tuberculosis. The flowers can be infused in oil and used to treat ear infections.

Other Uses: Sometimes referred to as the "Andrex plant" the leaves make a good alternative to toilet paper. The flower spike can be used as a hand drill for friction fire lighting.







References:

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