

CENTRAL JERSEY INVASIVE SPECIES STRIKE TEAM

Invasive Plant Fact Sheet

Black Swallowwort (*Cynanchum louiseae*, *Vincetoxicum nigrum*)

Also called: Dog-strangle Vine



Family name: Dogbane family (Apocynaceae)

Native range: Europe

General: Herbaceous, perennial, twining vine of up to 6 feet long. The stem is unbranched. Stems and pods can persist through winter.

Leaves: Opposite, toothless, shiny, dark green, oval to lance-shaped, 2-5 inches long and 0.5-2.5 inches wide.

Flowers: Dark purple clusters of 6-10 flowers are produced in opposite clusters, appearing May through July. "Petals" (corolla lobes) are fleshy and triangular with short straight, white hairs on the upper surface.

Fruit: Oval, brown, flattened, 0.25 inches long and have a tuft of white hairs. Contained in slender, tapered pods, 1.5 to 2.75 inches in length. Immature pods are green, turning brown with maturity. Seeds travel long distances via wind.

Look-alikes: Pale swallowwort (*Cynanchum rossicum*) is very similar to black swallowwort. Both are non-native and highly invasive. All detected occurrences should be eradicated. Smooth swallowwort or honeyvine (*Cynanchum*

laeve) is a native with *white* flowers, and its leaves have a distinct heart-shaped base. There are no records of this plant in NJ, but there are records from neighboring states.

Habitat: Forest, forest edge, floodplain forest, forest wetland, wet meadow, yard or garden.

Threats to native habitats: Black swallowwort can quickly overtop shrubs and trees, completely shading them from the sun. Its dense growth crowds out native plants. In the absence of vegetation or other structures to climb, will create dense mats that suppress the growth of other plant life. In addition to spreading via seed, plants spread via rhizomes (underground stems) that form extensive patches.



NJ Status: Black swallowwort is currently uncommon. However, it is *highly threatening* to natural plant communities. All detected occurrences should be eradicated.

Commercial Availability: Not found.

Sources: <http://nbii-nin.ciesin.columbia.edu/ipane/icat/browse.do?specield=5>

<http://www.nps.gov/plants/ALIEN/fact/cylo1.htm>

<http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=CYLA>

Rhoads, A.F. and T. Block. 2007. *Plants of Pennsylvania*. 2nd ed. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, PA. p. 773.



Central Jersey Invasive Species Strike Team (CJISST) is a regional cooperative effort to detect, map, and manage emerging populations of invasive species. This initiative is a partnership of state, county, and municipal agencies, conservation groups, and private citizens. To learn more, please contact us: **Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space**, (609) 730-1560, www.fohvos.org or **Upper Raritan Watershed Association**, (908) 234-1852, www.urwa.org.

