

FWG invasive plant fact sheet



Pale Swallowwort

a.k.a. Dog-strangling vine

Cynanchum rossicum (= *Vincetoxicum rossicum*)

This plant is highly invasive.

It will thrive in shade, sun, and all soil conditions, spread rapidly, reduce or eliminate other plants, and is extremely difficult to control. If you see this plant in your garden, REMOVE IT IMMEDIATELY.

- Swallowwort belongs to the Milkweed family. It is a perennial, twining vine, up to 2 m in height, with small pink to dark red, 5-lobed flowers, pairs of leaves, and slender seed pods. Each pod produces numerous wind-borne seeds resembling those of Common Milkweed.
- Pale Swallowwort is native to the Ukraine and Russia. Here it has no known pests or diseases to control its spread. It may affect Monarch butterflies by displacing their host plant, Common Milkweed. Larvae hatched on swallowwort may not survive.
- The sap of this plant can cause an allergic reaction in some people. Wear gloves when handling it and wash exposed skin with soap afterward.

Control

- Cutting, mowing and mulching provide limited control but resprouting occurs rapidly.
- Pulling apparently stimulates the root crown to resprout. Removing the entire root crown area (where the stem joins the roots) and destroying it is effective but difficult when an infestation is widespread. Even small pieces of root crown left in the soil can regrow.
- The effects of glyphosate (a herbicide) are variable; repeated applications are necessary, generally over several seasons.
- A combination of removing flower heads before they set seed, mowing, digging up the root crown, and mulching will control small infestations.
- Bio-control offers the best hope for managing widespread invasions, but this is still in the early research stage.



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Text and photos: Christine Hanrahan