



DOG-STRANGLING VINE

Vincetoxicum rossicum

One of Ontario's Most Unwanted Invasive Plants!



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Did you know?

Also known as black swallowwort or pale swallowwort, dog-strangling vine does not actually strangle dogs but it can "strangle" native plants and small trees if it is in dense patches. This plant was first observed in Ontario in the late 1800s, and is originally native to Eurasia.

Impacts

Dog-strangling vine grows and spreads very quickly. It can invade forests and create dominate ground covers. The vine can attach to small trees and plants and **climb up to 2 m high**. Dense clusters can displace native plants and alter the forest ecology, and even the forest birds present.

Its seeds are fluffy and white, similar to milkweed, and can be easily distributed in disturbed areas by wind. As well, the predicted threatened monarch butterflies are thought to be impacted by dog-strangling vine. These butterflies will sometimes lay their eggs on the vine thinking it is milkweed and the larvae consequently do not survive.

Description

- Leaves are oval shaped with a pointed tip arranged oppositely on the stem, and can be 5-10 cm long.
- The **leaves are a glossy green in spring and turn yellow in late Summer.**
- **Flowers are a pink-maroon color** and very small, and they are randomly placed throughout the vine.
- Fruiting seed pods start to form in July, producing white fluffy seeds in late summer.
- The vine is found commonly in disturbed areas like highways, railways, Christmas tree plantations, nursery and perennial crop farms, and abandoned pastures.



Foliage, Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, bugwood.org



Seeds, Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, bugwood.org



Photo by Andrea Hicks, OFAH

Reported sightings in our watershed

Dog-strangling vine is beginning to invade the NVCA watershed. It is most common south of Highway 89. It is also present along portions of the Collingwood shoreline—near globally rare coastal marshes. A small patch in the internationally significant Minesing Wetlands is being controlled in partnership with Nature Conservancy Canada, Simcoe County and NVCA.

What you can do

- Report sightings and submit a digital photo to <http://www.eddmaps.org/ontario>.
- Cut back any dog-strangling vine on private property to keep it from spreading.
- Remember to clean your shoes after hiking and keep pets on a leash to avoid further spread.

Control methods

- Removal of dog-strangling vine is quite difficult once established.
- Ideally, digging out the root of a first year established plant will prevent its spread.
- Care must be taken to remove the entire root since plants can re-sprout from any remaining rootstock.
- Once dog-strangling vine has reached the second year of growth, the roots are developed and strong and are more difficult to remove manually.
- Large infestations can be controlled using an herbicide; however a Letter of Opinion is needed by MNR before use (see http://partners.simcoe.ca/ws_par/groups/public/@pub/@tiny/documents/web_content/wspar_037107.pdf).

More information

- [Ontario's Invading Species Awareness Program](#)
- [Dog-Strangling Vine Fact Sheet](#)
- [Dog-Strangling Vine Best Management Practices](#)