



Pale Swallow-wort

Cynanchum rossicum (Kleopov) Borhidi
Synonym: *Vincetoxicum rossicum*

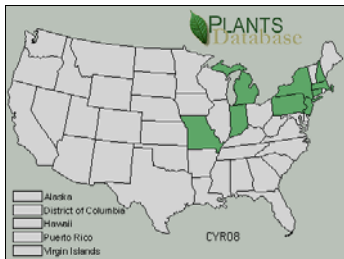
Common Names: pale swallow-wort, European swallow-wort

Native Origin: southwestern Europe

Description: An herbaceous perennial vine in the milkweed family (*Asclepiadaceae*) growing to a height of 2- 6 feet at maturity. Leaves are simple, opposite, 3 inches long, waxy and oblong to ovate with pointed tips. Leaf stems emit a pungent herbal smell when crushed. Stems grow 3 – 6 feet long and may be climbing or creeping and twine around themselves and other plants. Flowers are purplish black with yellow centers and have 5 petals with small hairs. Flowers bloom from June to mid-August and emit a slight rotting odor. Seed pods split open from August to October releasing windborne seeds. Plants produce up to 2,000 seeds. The root system is made up of a massive collection of roots and rhizomes.



Habitat: It is located in oak or mixed hardwood forests to heavily shaded woods. It can be found in disturbed sunny areas, prairies, savannas, fields, roadsides, edges of woods, pastures, fence-rows, rocky areas and disturbed sites. It has a wide tolerance to light and moisture conditions, but not found in standing water. It prefers moist to dry soils. Many large populations are found in areas with shallow soil over limestone bedrock.



Distribution: This species is reported from states shaded on Plants Database map. It is reported invasive in NH, NY, and WI.

Ecological Impacts: It is an invasive vine that can grow rapidly over native vegetation. It has the ability to dominate the understory of woodlands. Wind-dispersed seeds allow it to disperse over long distances. When cut, this plant re-sprouts vigorously, making control difficult. There is concern that members of the milkweed family may affect future monarch populations because butterflies that lay eggs on these species rather than on native milkweed plants (*Asclepias spp.*) experience a much higher mortality rate.

Control and Management:

- **Manual-** Hand pulling can be labor intensive and difficult since the stem base is brittle; remove plants before seed dispersal, discard by burning
- **Chemical-** It can be effectively controlled using any of several readily available general use herbicides such as glyphosate or triclopyr. Follow label and state requirements.

References:

www.forestimages.org, <http://plants.usda.gov>, www.nps.gov/plants/alien, www.ct-botanical-society.org, www.ipcnys.org/invasive_species, <http://webapps.lib.uconn.edu/ipane>, Czarapata, Elizabeth J. Invasive Plants of the Upper Midwest, An Illustrated Guide to their Identification and Control, 2005 p. 132-133, [tncweeds.ucdavis.edu/ photos/cynro01.jpg](http://tncweeds.ucdavis.edu/photos/cynro01.jpg)