



Black Swallow-wort *Vincetoxicum nigrum* *

* May be classified as *Cynanchum louiseae*

Native Origin: France, Italy, Portugal, and Spain; it is believed to have arrived to North America as a horticultural plant.



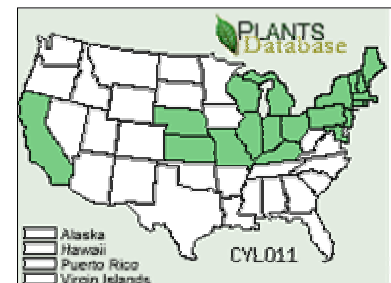
Description: Black swallow-wort is an herbaceous perennial twining vine in the milkweed family (Asclepiadaceae) that grows 3 to 6 feet in height depending on habitat and available support. Opposite leaves grow 2-4 inches long and are hairless and smooth, oblong to ovate in shape, and narrow to a point at the tip. Purple-black flowers are borne in small clusters in the leaf axils. In the Northeastern United States, flowering begins in late May, peaks in mid-June and ends in mid-July. Flowers remain open for six to eight days and have the scent of rotting fruit. The fruit pods are 1 ½ -3 inches long and split open lengthwise along one side to release tufted, windborne seeds from mid-August to early October. It can spread clonally from deep rhizomes.



Habitat: It is found in a wide range of habitats from dry and sunny to shaded and moist, from shallow soils on limestone bedrock to deep well-drained silt-loam soils, from wooded ravines and talus (sloping mass of rock fragments) to alluvial woods, pastures and grasslands. Coastal and roadside infestations are common, indicating a probable tolerance of alkaline soils and a possible preference for calcareous soils. It is found in disturbed areas such as highway, rail, utility and other transportation corridors, limestone quarries, abandoned pastures and old fields.

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

Ecological Impacts: *Vincetoxicum nigrum* can invade natural areas and suppress other plant species by competing for soil moisture and nutrients, light, other environmental factors. In Vermont, it is out competing a population of a federally endangered endemic species, Jesup's milkvetch, *Astragalus robbinsii* var. *jesupi*. T. Rawinski, USDA FS relayed that, "There is also concern that monarch butterflies will oviposit on swallow-wort instead of milkweed; the hatching caterpillars cannot develop on swallow-wort." Loss of native plant species may reduce biodiversity and delay or redirect succession as well as reduce the value of habitat to wildlife.



Control and Management:

- **Manual-** mowing or hand pulling pods as they are forming minimizes seed production; dig out isolated plants and dispose properly
- **Chemical-** It can be effectively controlled using any of several readily available general use herbicides such as glyphosate in late summer to early fall. Repeat applications if necessary. Follow label and state requirements.

References: USDA Plant Database- <http://plants.usda.gov>, www.invasive.org/eastern, www.invasives.org, ELEMENT STEWARDSHIP ABSTRACT-http://tncweeds.ucdavis.edu/esadocs/documnts/vinc_sp.pdf