

*Cynanchum louiseae*, Black Swallow-wort

Black Swallow-wort is a vine that often forms large patches. Swallow-wort is typically found in upland areas, rocky shores, fields and woodlands as the plant can tolerate a variety of environmental conditions. The plant tends to twist around itself in a tangle, making it difficult to walk through, affecting habitat and recreation. This plant has toxic leaves, which is currently negatively effecting the monarch butterfly which confuses swallow-wort for milkweed.



**Description:** Black Swallow-wort has long, oval leaves that are opposite. Leaves are about three inches long and two inches wide. The flowers are small and star-like, with a deep purple coloration. The bean-like seed pods are one to three inches long and burst open when ripe.

**Control:** Swallow-wort has a deep root system, making it hard to mechanically remove. The seed pods may be collected in plastic bags as long as they are disposed of properly. Collecting seed pods will aid in preventing the spread, but it is not a permanent solution. Chemical herbicides (glyphosate or triclopyr) may also be used to control swallow-wort. Biological controls for this species are currently being investigated such as the Ukranian moth, *Hypena opulenta*.

**Look-alikes:** Pale swallow-wort has different color flowers but is otherwise very visually similar. Honeyvine (*Cynanchum laeve*) also has similar physical features as the swallow-wort but different flowers.



**Flower Time and Description:** Swallow-wort flowers in the early summer, producing seed pods in late July to early August which can be seen long into the winter. The seeds themselves have cottony tufts like milkweed.