



Pale swallow-wort

Vincetoxicum rossicum (Kleopow) Barbar., Pale swallow-wort, Apocynaceae

Synonyms: *Cynanchum rossicum* Kleopow, *Cynanchum medium* auct. non R. Br., *Vincetoxicum medium* auct. non (R. Br.) Decne. (https://www.itis.gov/servlet/SingleRpt/SingleRpt?search_topic=TSN&search_value=523295#null)



Pale swallow-wort flowers and opposite leaves. Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org.

Species Description & Habitat

Species Description

Pale swallow-wort is an herbaceous, twining, long-lived perennial vine that can grow to 2 m in length. Leaves are opposite, dark green, oval, and shiny. Plants flower from June to September. Flowers occur in clusters, are pale to dark maroon, purple or pinkish, 5-petaled, and star-shaped. Fruits look like slender milkweed pods. When mature, pods split and release small flat seeds with tufts of white hairs that allow the seeds to be readily dispersed by the wind.

Habitat

Pale swallow-wort occurs in disturbed areas such as highway, rail, utility and other transportation corridors, limestone quarries, abandoned pastures and old fields, and in perennial crop fields but can also invade natural areas with some type of disturbance regime. This species occurs in dry, sunny open are-

Introduction and Impact

Pale swallow-wort is native to the Ukraine and part of Russia. It was introduced in northeastern North America in the mid- to late 1800s and escaped from cultivated gardens or experimental plantations.

This species tolerates a wide range of light and moisture conditions. It can grow rapidly over native vegetation, outcompeting native species and dominating the area where it occurs. Wind-dispersed seeds allow it to disperse over long distances. This species is also a vigorous resprouter when cut.



States where pale swallow-wort occurs. United States Department of Agriculture Plants Database (<https://plants.usda.gov/core/profile?symbol=CYRO8>). Accessed 28 May 2018.

Distribution in Introduced Range

In the United States, pale swallow-wort is documented from Connecticut, Indiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin (https://wiki.bugwood.org/Vincetoxicum_rossicum).

Pale swallow-wort is invasive in Canada and occurs in British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec. It is also documented from Norway where it has a limited distribution.



Pale swallow-wort in fruit with seed. John M. Randall, The Nature Conservancy, Bugwood.org.



Pale swallow-wort infestation. John M. Randall, The Nature Conservancy, Bugwood.org.

Control and Management

Pale swallow-wort can be effectively controlled using cultural (grazing) and chemical control methods. Triclopyr and glyphosate have been used to control this species. A systemic herbicide must be used against this perennial plant. There are also some potential biological control agents being investigated including several species of leaf-feeding moths. The species *Hypena opulenta* was successfully released in Ottawa, Canada but has not yet been approved for release in the USA.

Regulatory Status

Pale swallow-wort is listed as banned in Connecticut, prohibited in Massachusetts, and a prohibited invasive species in New Hampshire.

References and Resources

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