

# Black Swallow-Wort

(*Cynanchum louiseae*)

## Identification

- Herbaceous perennial vine that can form strangling mats and walls of vegetation.
- Shiny dark green and oval shaped leaves with pointed tips.
- Small star-shaped dark purple flowers in clusters of 6-10 begin to appear in June.
- Green young seed pods resemble long, slender spindles, tapered at both ends.
- When mature, seed pods split open in July to release flat brown seeds covered in white hairs.



## Ecological Concern

- As Black Swallow-Wort is related to milkweeds, Monarch Butterflies may lay eggs on it, but the caterpillars die when they eat the plant.
- Infestations of Black Swallow-Wort can smother other plants, shrubs, and small trees.

## **This plant is harmful to Monarch butterflies and their caterpillars, and what can you do to help?**

- If find the plant on your own property, you can do the following:
  - Pull up the vines, with any flowers or seed pods.
  - Dig up the plant's entire root system, using a dandelion weeder or narrow trowel.
  - Put all plant material into a tightly closed bag and dispose of it in the trash.
  - Do not put into yard waste bags or in your compost! The roots will re-sprout, and seeds are not destroyed in composting operations.
- Replant with [milkweeds that can support Monarch butterfly caterpillars](#), such as Butterfly Milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) or Swamp Milkweed (*A. incarnata*). These are less aggressive than Common Milkweed (*A. syriaca*) and beautiful plants to grow for the butterflies. This will help with the ongoing efforts to protect and expand the Monarch Butterfly habitat.