

Dog Strangling Vine

One of Ontario's Most

UN-WANTED

Invasive Plant Species

The Swallow-worts - *Vincetoxicum rossicum* syn.
Cynanchum rossicum C. louiseae
Alias: Dog-strangling vine

PROFILE

Dog-strangling vine (DSV) is a perennial, twining soft-stemmed vine-like plant that dies to the ground each season. It is a member of the milkweed family, originating from Eastern Europe, and introduced to Canada approximately 120 years ago. Currently it is finding its way into our backyards and natural areas at an alarming rate, as it produces seeds that are easily carried by the wind over great distances.

DSV prefers disturbed areas like highways, railways, utility and transport corridors, Christmas tree plantations, nursery and perennial crop farms, limestone quarries and abandoned pastures. Once a colony is established, DSV will quickly spread into adjacent undisturbed areas, displacing the native plant species and altering the natural landscape.

MUG SHOT

Dog-strangling vine can grow 1–2 m (3–6 feet) in height with leaves that are 5–10 cm long. The leaves are oval in shape with a pointed tip and are arranged oppositely along the stem. They are glossy in luster and appear green in the early summer and yellow in the late summer.

DSV has visible flowers from late May to mid July. These flowers have five pinkish maroon colored petals that are 5–9 mm (0.2–0.4 inches) in length. Like other milkweed species, dog-strangling vine produces pods that split open lengthwise to disperse their seeds in the late summer. These pods are abundant in July and August and appear smooth and slender with a light green color. The pods are

usually 4–7 cm (1.5–2.5 inches) long. The fruits of DSV often occur in pairs and are 4–6 cm (1.5–2 inches) long and 5 mm (0.2 inches) wide.

The roots are fibrous or thread like and spreading, giving them the ability to hold onto the soil firmly. Within the root structure, they have subterranean buds (buds growing below the soil) which can produce several shoots. Without the support of brush, where DSV persists in open areas, it twines amongst itself forming tops that appear rope like.



Photo Credits: Ken Towle

LEAF & FLOWER



**SEED
POD**



INVASION

Photo Credits: Greg Bales

UNWANTED CASE: DOG-STRANGLING VINE

No.

INVADING SPECIES HOTLINE 1-800-563-7711

WEBSITE WWW.INVADINGSPECIES.COM • WWW.ONTARIOINVASIVEPLANTS.CA

TIPS ON MANAGEMENT

Land managers, farmers, landowners and community members must extend their best efforts to detect this species on their properties early in its establishment, avoiding larger more labour intensive control efforts down the road.

Manual and or mechanical removal of the entire plant, including the root, may work to control the plant if it is done in the first year of it's establishment. Care must be taken to remove the entire root, as the plant will re-sprout from buds on the rootstock. By the second year manual pulling or digging becomes more difficult as the plant roots are stronger and larger. Seed spread can be controlled if the plant is cut back or pulled before it goes to seed. Pulling and digging will have to be done more than once during a season, as plants will re-grow and produce more pods.

The use of herbicides has met with some success, especially for larger infestations. Glyphosate in at least a 3% solution can be effective if the plants are sprayed while in flower, followed by a second spraying approximately one month later. However a Letter of Opinion from the district MNR may be required before controlling invasive plants with chemicals. The Pesticide Act does have some excepted uses listed including control in forestry, agriculture, public health and others. Consult with your district MNR if you have questions.

TIPS ON PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF INVASIVE PLANTS IN THE LANDSCAPE

- ◆ Learn to properly identify and manage invasive plants on your property.
- ◆ Avoid using invasive perennials in gardens and landscaping. Always check your plant references before choosing garden plants.
- ◆ Purchase non-invasive plants from reputable suppliers. Native plants will provide a variety of benefits to the plants and wildlife that also depend on them.
- ◆ Do not dispose of compost or garden waste in natural areas as this can disturb the natural vegetation.
- ◆ When hiking, remain on designated trails and keep pets on a leash to reduce transferring invasive plants and seeds to new areas.
- ◆ When an invasive plant is flowering, cut the flower tops to prevent the plant from going to seed, put it in a garbage bag and throw it in the garbage.
- ◆ Share this fact sheet and spread the word to friends, family and neighbours.
- ◆ When in doubt about a plant, whether it is invasive or how it should be controlled, contact the **"Invading Species Hotline"** @ **1-800-563-7711** or **www.invadingspecies.com** or **www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca**



A Message from the Ontario Invasive Plant Council (OIPC)

The Ontario Invasive Plant Council facilitates a coordinated and effective response to the threat of invasive plants by providing leadership, expertise and a forum to educate, motivate and empower organizations and citizens. The OIPC is composed of conservation authorities, academic institutions, aboriginal organizations, stewardship networks, private consultants, industry and environmental NGOs as well as all levels of government. For more information on the council please visit www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca