



## Invasive Plant Atlas of New England

### Catalog of Species Search Results



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## *Cynanchum rossicum*

(Pale swallow-wort )

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### COMMON NAME

Pale swallow-wort

### FULL SCIENTIFIC NAME

*Cynanchum rossicum* (Kleopov) Barbarich

### FAMILY NAME COMMON

Milkweed family

### FAMILY SCIENTIFIC NAME

Asclepiadaceae

### IMAGES



Close-up of flower



Close-up of flowers



Incursion



Habit



Comparison of  
flowers of  
*Cynanchum  
louiseae* (top)  
and *Cynanchum  
rossicum*  
(bottom)



Fruit



Incursion



Close-up of fruit  
with seeds

## NOMENCLATURE/SYNONYMS

**Synonyms:** *Vincetoxicum rossicum* (Kleopov) Barbarich  
*Cynanchum medium* auct. non R. Br.  
*Vincetoxicum medium* auct. non (R. Br.) Dcne.

## DESCRIPTION

### Botanical Glossary

*Cynanchum rossicum* is an herbaceous, perennial vine that is vegetatively very similar to *Cynanchum louiseae*. The stems can reach 1.5 m (5 ft.) in length. The leaves are opposite, and ovate and acute in shape. They are 9-12 cm (3.5-4.7 in.) long, and 5-6 cm (2-2.5 in.) wide. The petioles measure 1 cm (0.4 in.) in length.

Flowers are borne in opposite, axillary cymes from June to September. The corolla of *Cynanchum rossicum* is 5-lobed, glabrous and ranges in color from maroon to dark pink; its lobes are longer than wide and are shaped like an isosceles triangle. The membrane connecting the segments of the corona is approximately 1/2 the height of the corona. The peduncles are 2-5 cm long. The fruits are slender follicles measuring 4-6 cm long and 0.5 cm wide.

Page References Fernald 1176, Gleason & Cronquist 399, Holmgren 374. See reference section below for full citations.

## SIMILAR SPECIES

*Cynanchum louiseae* Kartesz & Ghandi (Black swallow-wort)

The chart below shows important character differences between *Cynanchum rossicum* and *Cynanchum louiseae*.

For images and more information about *C. louiseae* click [here](#) to go to the catalog of species.

Character	<i>Cynanchum louiseae</i>	<i>Cynanchum rossicum</i>
Shape of corolla lobes	Deltoid	2x as long as broad
Corolla lobe color	Dark purple	Pale yellow/purple to reddish purple
Inner corolla lobe surface	Pubescent with short white hairs	Glabrous

### REPRODUCTIVE/DISPERSAL MECHANISMS

The seeds of *Cynanchum rossicum* are dispersed primarily by wind. If they were to fall into moving water, they would float and be transported downstream.

### DISTRIBUTION

*Cynanchum rossicum* is native to Europe where it occurs in different habitats than the similar *Cynanchum louiseae*. It has been reported from Ontario, Canada. In the United States, has been reported from Missouri, Michigan, Indiana, Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey. In New England, its range is much more restricted than that of *Cynanchum louiseae*. However, there are populations in Massachusetts, Connecticut and New Hampshire.

### HISTORY OF INTRODUCTION IN NEW ENGLAND

Although its history of introduction in New England is uncertain, the first record for *Cynanchum rossicum* is from New Haven, Connecticut, in 1881. The plant has most likely spread by wind or by being planted in other locations.

### HABITATS IN NEW ENGLAND

Abandoned Field  
 Early Successional Forest  
 Edge  
 Floodplain Forest  
 Forest Wetland  
 Pasture  
 Planted Forest  
 Roadside  
 Utility Right-of-Way

Vacant Lot  
Yard or Garden

*Cynanchum rossicum* can be found almost anywhere, including woodlands, fields, and along roadsides, floodplains, urban areas and utility rights-of-way. It grows well in almost any upland situation.

## THREATS

*Cynanchum rossicum* is a vine that can grow rapidly over native vegetation. It also has the ability to dominate the understory of a woodland. Wind-dispersed seeds allow it to disperse over long distances. When it is cut, this plant resprouts vigorously, making control difficult.

## MANAGEMENT LINKS

[The Nature Conservancy](#)

## DOCUMENTATION NEEDS

Documentation required: Herbarium specimen or mounted snippet of the stem with flowers.

Best time for documentation: Late spring, summer.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Integrated Taxonomic Information System \(ITIS\)](#)  
General taxonomic information

[The PLANTS Database](#)  
Distribution information and additional links

[The Nature Conservancy](#)

[Invasive Plant Council of New York State](#)

## REFERENCES

Fernald, M.L. 1950. Gray's Manual of Botany 8th ed. American Book Co., Boston.

Flora Europaea vol.3. T.G. Tutin, V.H. Heywood, N.A. Burges, D.H. Valentine, S.M. Walters and D.A. Webb ed. 1964. Cambridge University Press, Great Britain.

Gleason, H.A. and A.C. Cronquist. 1991. Manual of Vascular Plants of the Northeastern United States and Adjacent Canada. 2nd ed. New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, New York.

Holmgren, N.H. 1998. Illustrated Companion to Gleason and Cronquist's Manual. New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, New York.

Lauvanger, E.G. and L. Borgen. 1998. The Identity Of Vincetoxicum In Norway. Nordic Journal Of Botany 18 (3): 353-364.

Sheeley, S.E., and D.J.Raynal. 1996. The Distribution And Status Of Species Of Vincetoxicum In Eastern North America. Bulletin Of The Torrey Botanical Club 123 (2): 148-156.

## DATA RETRIEVAL

Select a task by clicking the radio button and then click "Submit Selection."

- Formatted display as table
- Export as comma-delimited text file

## MAPS OF PLANT DISTRIBUTION IN NEW ENGLAND

Select a study area by clicking the radio button and then click "Submit Selection."

- The whole New England area
- One or more states
- One or more counties
- One or more towns (county sub-divisions)

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