

What is Black Swallow-Wort and How to Get Rid of It

What is Black Swallow-Wort (BSW)?

BSW, often found on chain-link fences, or in woodlands, gardens, and shrubs, is a fast-spreading invasive plant that can be found throughout Somerville.



Why is it a problem?

BSW threatens monarch butterflies and songbirds, and displaces native plant communities that are vital to native insects, birds, and other urban wildlife.

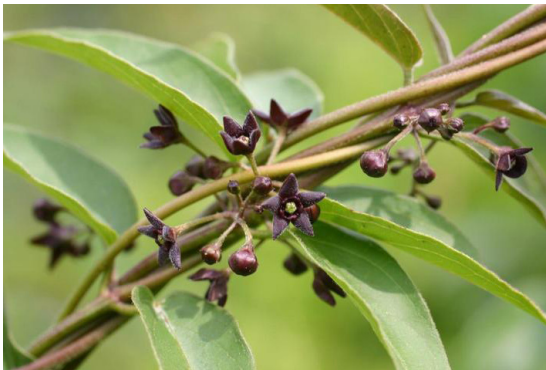
What can you do?

You can help by removing green pods before they turn brown and disperse seeds. If possible, remove the whole plant by digging up the entire root system. Dispose of BSW in sealed trash bags. Do not compost or place in paper or yard waste bags as it will resprout.

Identifying Black Swallow-Wort

LEAVES

These green, shiny leaves come in pairs along winding vines that are often found growing on fences and shrubs.



SEED PODS

These slim, green pods can be seen starting in June. They turn brown as they mature to produce and disperse wind-borne seeds.



ROOTS

These fleshy, white, and dense roots break easily. If the plant is not uprooted completely, it will regrow.



FLOWERS

These small, dark purple flowers grow in clusters. Each star-shaped flower has five petals with a green center.

