

# Dog-strangling Vine



(*Vincetoxicum rossicum*)

Photo: Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org



Photo: Ontario Woodlot Association

## How to Identify Dog-strangling Vine

- Forms thick mats of vegetation and may dominate ground cover where there are gaps in canopy
- Has a woody rootstalk that can grow to heights of .6 to 2 m (24 to 80 in) tall
- Is abundant in urban and rural settings and adjacent to lakes
- Spreads quickly

## Description

### Family

- Milkweed family

### Range & Habitat

- Thrives in limestone-based soils and old fields, shrub thickets from southern Ontario to Ottawa

### Height

- .6 to 2 m (24 to 80 in) tall

### Flowers

- Late June/July; emerge at the axils of the leaves in clusters of 5 to 20 flowers with five petals, red, maroon or pink

### Leaves

- Are opposite, smooth, oval shaped with rounded base, wavy edges and pointed tip
- Colour may vary from medium-light to dark; some dark leaves have a lustre
- 7 to 12 cm (3 to 5 in) long and 5 to 7 cm (2 to 3 in) wide

### Stem

- Downy hairs and stems can twine or climb; can twist around themselves forming thick mats

### Fruit

- July - August usually 2 slender, long, smooth pod-like fruit form at each leaf axil; 4 to 7 cm (1.5 to 3 in) long
- Split open to release seeds which have feather tufts which spread by wind and water

### Origin

- Invasive



Photo: John M. Randall, The Nature Conservancy, Bugwood.org



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Photo: Greg Bales, ontario.ca/invasivespecies

## Impact

- An invasive perennial that spreads rapidly causing damage to ecosystems and threatens rare vegetation
- Hinders recreational activities, chokes out native species and negatively impacts managed woodlots
- Out-competes native plants for space, water and nutrients
- Creates heavy shade and produces chemicals that discourage other plants from growing nearby
- Dog-strangling Vine can negatively affect wildlife by altering habitat.
- Dense patches of the vine can suppress native tree seedlings, young saplings and woodland groundcover plants due to heavy shading and can negatively affect forest regeneration.
- Adversely affects Agriculture obstructing fences, fields, pastures and livestock



Photo: Greg Bales, ontario.ca/invasivespecies

Once Dog-strangling Vine has been confirmed at a location, a control plan can be developed based on:

- infestation size
- site accessibility
- potential for spread
- risk of environmental, economic or social impacts

Site specific conditions such as native plant diversity, wildlife usage and water table fluctuations should also be considered when developing control plans.

An inventory of each site is strongly recommended before starting control efforts to help ensure proper methods and timing are used to minimize negative impacts.

## Management of Dog-strangling Vine

Controlling Dog-strangling Vine before it becomes locally established will reduce its impacts on biodiversity, the economy and society. Control of Dog-strangling Vine should take place in early spring, as plants are typically less than 30 cm in height.

1. Try to remove the outlying populations first
2. Concentrate on high-priority areas (most productive, sensitive ecosystem or area frequented by people)
3. Dedicate a certain time of each year to control the vine and encourage landowners/managers to participate
4. Plan to replant native plants species after eradication
5. Follow-up monitoring is crucial

## Control Methods:

Pulling	Digging	Seed Pod Removal	Mowing	Tarping	Herbicide
<p><i>Problematic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the entire root system is not removed, the vine can re-sprout from the root</li> <li>• Re-visit site for at least three years</li> </ul>	<p><i>Most effective</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For small populations only</li> <li>• Digging up the root crown is more effective than hand pulling</li> </ul>	<p><i>Not recommended</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For established populations</li> <li>• Time-consuming and intensive, prevents spreading</li> <li>• Early to mid August</li> <li>• Followup end of September</li> </ul>	<p><i>Effective</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vines that have been mowed can re-sprout rapidly</li> <li>• Should be done just after the vine flowers &amp; before it produces seed pods</li> <li>• Will affect other species</li> </ul>	<p><i>Effective</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Late spring and continued through the growing season or longer</li> <li>• Monitor edges for re-growth</li> <li>• Not recommended for low light areas (not enough heat)</li> </ul>	<p><i>Recommended</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For small to large established populations</li> <li>• Apply after leaves are fully expanded in spring &amp; subsequently to ensure full coverage</li> </ul>