



June 20th, 2024

Dear Resident,

In the summer of 2023, black swallow-wort, a priority invasive species in the region, was found on the Mecosta-Isabella County line near Millbrook. Black swallow-wort is a fast spreading invasive perennial vine that can quickly overtake areas and outcompete native species. In the fall of 2023, North Country Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (NCCISMA) worked with the landowners on all known infested properties to initiate control of this infestation.

Black swallow-wort is a member of the milkweed family, and acts as a sink for monarch butterflies, whose declining numbers are well known and concerning. When both common milkweed, the monarch butterfly's obligate host plant, and swallow-wort coexist, monarch butterflies have been found to lay their eggs on swallow-wort instead. This is problematic because swallow-wort leaves are toxic to monarchs and cause larvae feeding on their leaves to die. Swallow-wort is also toxic to mammals, including livestock.

Similar to native milkweed species, invasive swallow-wort has fluffy seed pods that can be spread long distances by wind. **For this reason, all property owners within a ¼ mile radius of the infestation are being contacted.** On the back of this letter you will find several photos of invasive black swallow-wort, with keys to identification. If you have black swallow-wort on your property, or know of infestations elsewhere, please contact one of the below Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas (CISMA).

Funding from the Michigan Invasive Species Grant Program has been received to address these infestations in 2024 due to the problematic nature of black swallow-wort.

Reports in Isabella County:

Matthew Lindauer, Central Michigan CISMA
Email: Coordinator@CMCISMA.org
Phone: 989-414-2237

Reports in Mecosta County:

Zach Peklo, North Country CISMA
Email: Zach.Peklo@macd.org
Phone: 248-210-6047

Thank you for helping stop the spread of invasive species in the region. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out.

Sincerely,

The North Country a



Black Swallow-wort identification:

- A perennial vine that grows 5-6 feet and smothers native vegetation
- Small star shaped flowers present early June
- Milkweed like seed pod, when mature they will open to reveal a seed with cotton like strands that can be dispersed by wind
- Toxic to monarch caterpillars

