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**Black Swallow-wort Campaign statement  
Public Comment at City Council Meeting  
June 6, 2011**

My name is Rebecca Ramsay and my address is Five Exeter Park.

Four years ago, the Friends of Fresh Pond Reservation initiated a program to remove invasive weeds. There were several sessions per week. The first Thursday afternoon I showed up, I was helping Hanna, the Assistant Watershed Manager at the time. We arrived at an area behind Neville Place, off of the Beach Woods Path. She showed me how to use a trowel to dig up the roots of Black swallow-wort, the vine with shiny dark green leaves, purple flowers and pods later in the season. Nearly the entire fenced in area next to the Perimeter Path around the pond was blanketed with this vine. Some of the new trees and shrubs, such as hollies, were covered with it.

Almost every Thursday after that for most of the summer, the Friends group concentrated on removing Black Swallow-wort from that location. For two more summers, there was still more to do there, but I am pleased to say that hardly any remains in that particular area this summer. So with enough volunteers and persistence, it is possible to eradicate this aggressive weed, and without having to use herbicides. Home owners will be doing themselves and the City of Cambridge a huge favor by removing it from their property.

# UNWANTED

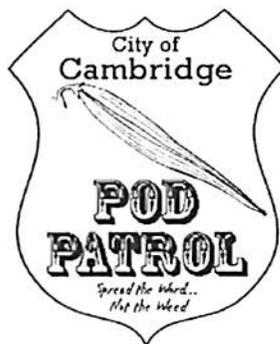
by birds, butterflies, and native plants

## BLACK SWALLOW-WORT

"THE DOG-STRANGLING VINE"

Armed with seed pods that look like chili peppers, shiny green leaves that come in pairs, purple star-shaped flowers, and grapping spaghetti-like roots, this invasive vine threatens monarch butterflies and songbirds and displaces native plant communities vital to insects, birds and other urban wildlife. Known to frequent chain-link fences, it is also found in woodlands and shrubs throughout Cambridge neighborhoods and is spreading fast!

Now that you know about it, you'll probably start to notice it everywhere you go. While it is difficult to dig it out completely because of its extensive roots, pulling green seed pods before they turn brown and open up is one important thing we can do to control this invader. Please dispose of pods in a tied plastic bag and put into the trash. *Do not put pods into yard waste bags or in your compost!*

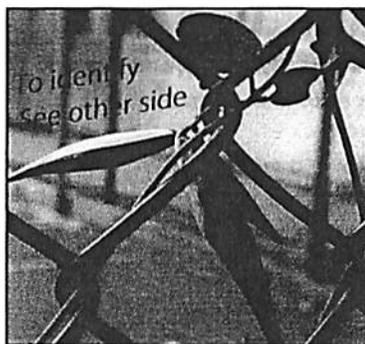


### Cambridge POD PATROL

*Spread the Word... Not the Weed*

 **Weedout &  
Campaign Kickoff**  
Sunday, July 10th 1 - 4 pm  
Fresh Pond Reservation

To register contact Deb: 617.349.6489  
dalbenberg@cambridgema.gov  
www.FriendsofFreshPond.org



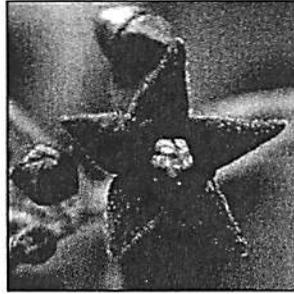
Sponsored by Coldwell Banker, Friends of Fresh Pond Reservation, Grow Native Massachusetts

# BLACK SWALLOW-WORT

**Leaves** shiny, green, come in pairs, quickly winding around fences and shrubs



**Flowers** small, purple, star-shaped

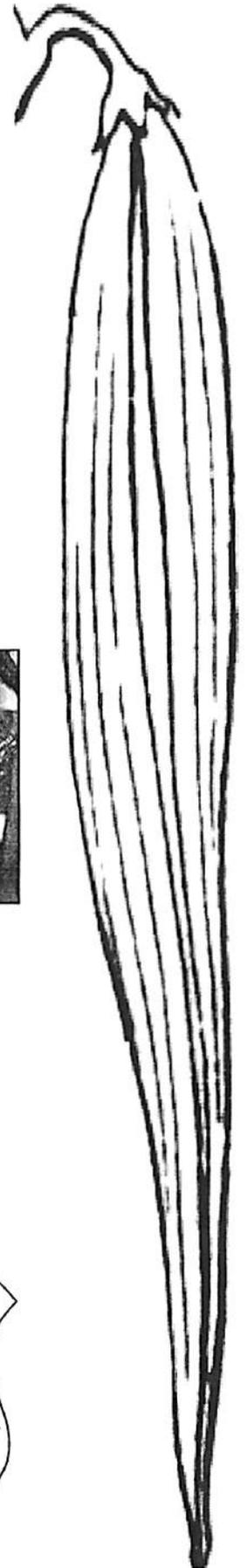


**Seed Pods** pull when pods are still slim, smooth and green

*\*Be careful pulling brown, papery pods that have already opened up (starting late July) - mature seeds can easily escape!*



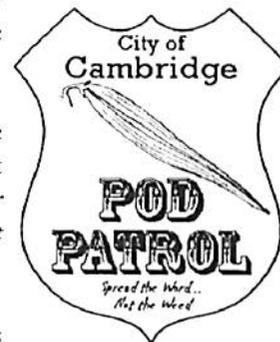
**Roots** white and fleshy tentacles that break off easily



To prevent seeds inside pods from escaping and spreading to new areas: Pick the pods, dispose of them in a tied plastic bag and put into the trash. *Do not put pods into yard waste bags or in your compost!*

If you find black swallow-wort on your own property: Dig up the plant with entire root system, dispose of it in a tied plastic bag and put into the trash. *Do not put black swallow-wort into yard waste bags or in your compost! The stoloniferous roots will readily resprout and seeds are not destroyed in composting operations.*

**\*Caution:** Plant contains poison that may irritate skin. Wearing gloves when pulling pods or digging up plants is recommended.



For detailed information go to:  
<http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/cylo1.htm>