

# Dogbanes-Hemp & Spreading

*Apocynum cannabinum* L & *A. androsaemifolium* L Dogbane Family

## Key identifying traits

- Spreading dogbane (Sd) grows from  $\frac{1}{2}$ '-2  $\frac{1}{2}$ ' tall; Hemp dogbane (Hd) grows much taller-up to 6'
- Both plants are much-branched (Hd has opposite branching) and have smooth, often red, stems
- 1-3" long, hairless, oblong lance-shaped leaves are arranged opposite or in whorls on short stalks
- Flowers of both are formed in clusters at the end of stems and in upper leaf axils; Sd flowers are small, pink, bell-shaped & fragrant; Hd flowers are small, greenish-white & tube-shaped
- Fruits of both are very long, 2"-6", narrow, cylindrical pods containing many seeds tipped with tufts of cottony hairs
- Both have white, milky sap

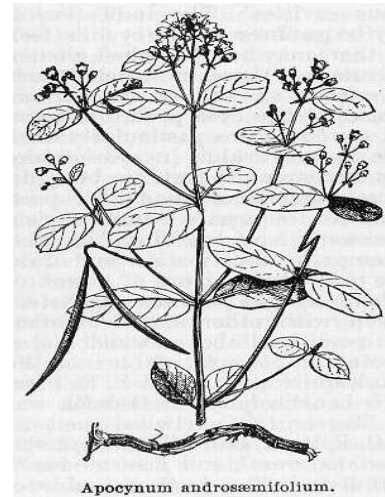


above: Sd flowers; below: Hd flowers



## Biology and ecology

- Rhizomatous perennials, reproducing by seed & roots
- Both are native to North America
- They prefer well-drained soils and are found along roadsides, forest openings and open hillsides
- Both are toxic to livestock (and humans), although browsing is rare because they are bitter
- Hd was widely used by early peoples as a source of strong fiber for ropes, nets, baskets, etc.



## Control

*Prevention* - Learn to identify plants; know your property; do not transplant from a roadsides or forest

*Biological* - No known introduced biological control; because they are native, they do have natural enemies

*Cultural* - Healthy crops and perennial grasses/forbs can help keep plants from invading and establishing

*Mechanical* - Very difficult once established due to the spreading root system; repeated, persistent cutting or tilling can wear out root reserves

*Chemical* - Many are effective, but most will take repeated applications



Hd leaf



Fibers of Hd

*Where found*- Scattered throughout the county, increasingly more prevalent along roadsides