

CUSCUTA PENTAGONA Engelm.
Five-angled Dodder

FAMILY: Cuscutaceae

HABIT: Leafless annual vines of indeterminate length, parasitic on a variety of herbaceous and woody species; flowering and fruiting June- October.

SIMILAR SPECIES: The genus *Cuscuta* is easily recognized and quite conspicuous. However, species within the genus are extremely difficult to identify without critical examination of flowers and fruits under magnification.

TOTAL RANGE: Throughout the United States and almost cosmop., living on a wide variety of hosts.

STATE RANGE (as of 2008): Post-1980 records are from Adams, Brown, Hamilton, and Marion counties. Pre-1980 records are from Ashtabula, Belmont, Butler, Cuyahoga, Erie, Hocking, Jackson, Lawrence, Mahoning, Montgomery, Vinton, Wayne, and Wood counties.

HABITAT: In full sun in a variety of dry situations.

HAZARDS: Members of this genus, although not necessarily this species, can cause considerable damage to cultivated plants and thus often are destroyed by farmers. Some of the rarities in *Cuscuta* may be destroyed incidentally in the process.

RECOVERY POTENTIAL: Unknown; probably poor.

INVENTORY GUIDELINES: Collect only fertile material. Attempt to obtain specimens with both flowers and fruits. Obtain a fertile portion of the host plant and press it with the *Cuscuta*. Collect, dry, and store some flowers and fruits of *Cuscuta* in a packet, unpressed. This will prevent the obscuring of critical characters (Austin, 1979).

COMMENTS: The true status of this species in the Ohio flora is difficult to ascertain accurately. The genus has not been well collected in the state and species identification is troublesome. The state range presented above, then, is quite tentative and subject to change.

SELECTED REFERENCES:

Austin, D.F. 1979. Comments on *Cuscuta*-for collectors and curators. Bull. Torr. Bot. Club 106: 227-228.

Yuncker, T.G. 1965. *Cuscuta*. N. Amer. Fl., ser. 2, pt. 4: 1-51.



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