

# Securigera varia

Invasive to Maine

Crown Vetch  
Axseed

Upland  
Fields, Developed Areas

## Leaves



Photo by Wikimedia user AnRo0002



Leaves are alternate compound pinnate with oval leaflets. Leaves are 5- 10cm long and leaflets are 1cm - 2cm long. Leaves are deep green. Leaflets have smooth margins with small points at the tips.

LEAF ARRANGEMENT	LEAF TYPE	LEAF/LEAFLET SHAPE	LEAF/LEAFLET EDGE
 ROSETTE	 SIMPLE	 LOBED	 TOOTHED
 ALTERNATE	 COMPOUND-PALMATE	 OVAL	 SMOOTH
 OPPOSITE	 COMPOUND-PINNATE	 BLADE	 WAVY

## Plant



Photo by Vera Buhl



Look for a 30 to 60 cm tall plant that is sprawling with pinkish-white to deep pink flowers. It commonly grows as a loose, bushy groundcover.

## Stem



Photo by Wikimedia user Ranko



Look for a green, ridged stem growing dichotomously (splits in two at intersections) with leaves growing from branch intersections. There are no tendrils.

## Seasonal Change



Left to Right: Andrew Butko, Matt Lavin



Flower clusters are found in early summer through late fall and form a "crown" of individual flowers. Seed pods are four sided and are "green bean" shaped.

## Similar Species

Crown vetch looks similar to other vetch species however it is not a true vetch. Crown vetch lacks tendrils, unlike most true vetches. Alfalfa flowers look similar however alfalfa has only three leaflets per leaf whereas crown vetch has many more.

## Did You Know?

Crown vetch is in the legume family, giving it the ability to take nitrogen from the atmosphere and convert it ammonium. Symbiotic bacteria do this for the legumes in a process called "nitrogen fixation". The nitrogen is added to the surrounding soil, helping other plants!

Researched and created by Caroline Casals

Help us improve this species card! Contact us with your updates.



Gulf of Maine  
Research Institute



[www.vitalsignsme.org](http://www.vitalsignsme.org)