

Garlic Mustard

Alliaria petiolata

Description: Garlic mustard is a biennial herb. In its first year it will produce small, 2-4 inch high rosettes with 3-4 round, scalloped leaves. In its second year it will grow 12-36 inches high and start producing clusters of small white flowers early in the spring. Seed pods are slender and 1-2 ½ inches long and seeds remain viable in the soil for 5 years. It emits a strong garlic smell when crushed and it can be eaten.

Ecological Threat: Garlic mustard spreads rapidly into high quality woodlands and is shade tolerant. It replaces native herbaceous cover and causes a decline in wildlife habitat and native diversity. Unlike many invasive species, which primarily invade disturbed habitats, garlic mustard can invade high quality habitats and has become a major problem in the U.S.

Control Methods:

Mechanical- Small populations can be controlled by hand-pulling as long as the seed heads are disposed of. Mowing can be effective if done right before flowering. Fall or early spring burns can also help control.

Chemical- Spot application of 2% glyphosate can be applied in early spring or late fall when native plants are dormant.

