

Garlic Mustard



Garlic mustard is a very invasive weed. The roots exude a chemical that inhibits other plants from growing, and it can grow in full sun or full shade, making it a threat to a wide variety of our native plants and habitats. Each plant can produce up to 5000 seeds, which remain viable in the soil for five years or more. All of these traits allow garlic mustard, once established in an area, to rapidly reproduce and spread, excluding native and landscaping plants while spreading quickly across the landscape.

In Minnesota, it is classified as a *Restricted Noxious Weed*.

Characteristics:

- Biennial plant that grows as a low basal rosette its first year. Distinct "S" shaped curve at base of stem.
- 1st plant year has heart-shaped, scallop-edged leaves; 2nd year plant has 2-3 ft. tall flowering stems.
- Bears numerous small clusters of small white flowers in late spring of the second year. Smells like GARLIC when crushed!
- Typically invades woodlands and forested habitats, shady landscaped areas along forested roadsides and trails.



Photo credit: EMSWCD.org

What Can You Do?

You can help get rid of it by preventing seed production of plants over several years, but it takes a little work and attention. Control is easiest when garlic mustard plants are in bloom (usually beginning late May), unless you can easily identify the rosettes (leaves) of the plant.

Hand removal can be a successful technique in areas that can be visited often/re-pulled frequently, such as private gardens/woods.

Keys for Hand Removal Success:

- 1) It's best initially to pull during flowering, before the plants produce seed. In Minnesota, that usually means late May.
- 2) Pull at the base of the plant and try to remove the entire root. Pulling after a rainstorm makes it much easier!
- 3) Pulled material will complete flowering and set seed, and spread, so be sure to bag and dispose of pulled plants.
- 4) DO NOT COMPOST – Garlic Mustard should be treated as trash and destroyed.
- 5) Revisit pulled sites as often as possible to re-pull plants that re-sprout from left behind root fragments. This is especially important later in the spring as seeds develop. An additional pull the year following is critical.

Mowing is not an effective way of controlling garlic mustard! Seed pods, shown here, will be spread to new areas by mowing!



Photo credit: EMSWCD.org

Information Provided by:

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