

# INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES ALERT: GARLIC MUSTARD

Garlic mustard is a biennial (two-year life cycle), herbaceous plant that spreads rapidly by seed. One of the most invasive and difficult to control weeds of the woodlands in our area; it is a major threat to our desirable native woodland wildflowers, tree seedlings, and wildlife. Garlic Mustard not only out-competes native plants by being one of the first plants to leaf out in the spring, but shades out competitors during the growing season and is an allelopathic plant (releases chemical inhibitors into the environment).

Garlic Mustard, introduced from Europe, was once commonly grown in gardens where its flavorful leaves were cultivated for salads. The leaves, stems, and seedpods have a strong garlic taste. The seedpods can be split in half lengthwise to release many tiny seeds, which can be used as a substitute for pepper.

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| Family:      | Mustard   |
| Height:      | 1-3'  |
| Flower:      | round cluster, 1-3" wide, of tiny white flowers; individual flowers, 1/4" wide, have 4 white petals. The four petals arranged in a cross pattern identify the Garlic Mustard as a member of the Mustard family.   |
| Leaf:        | first year rosettes have a dark green kidney-shaped leaves with a scalloped margins and deep veins. In the second spring, a flower stalk rises from the rosette, bearing alternate, coarsely toothed, heart-shaped lower leaves, 3-4" long, smaller triangular upper leaves, 1-2" long; all leaves smell strongly of garlic |
| Fruit:       | thin pod-like containers, up to 2"  |
| Bloom        | spring, summer  |
| Cycle/Origin | biennial, non-native  |
| Habitat:     | wet, shade, deciduous woods   |

## Distinctive features:

- Crushed leaves have the odor of garlic;
- The only tall, broad leaved, 4-petaled, white woodland flower blooming in early spring;
- First-year basal rosettes remain green through fall and winter – they are one of the earliest plants to begin active green growth in spring; and
- Allelopathic in nature



First year rosettes



Second year bloom & leaf

An excellent informational video on Garlic Mustard may be viewed on the internet at the following link:

<http://www.in-sitevideo.com/wff/garlicmustard.html>

A DVD copy of this video may be borrowed from Township hall to show interested parties.

For more information on this and other invasive species visit the Ohio Invasive Plants Council at:

<http://www.oipc.info/default.asp>