

GARLIC MUSTARD



ECOLOGICAL THREAT

Garlic mustard spreads into high quality woodlands, upland and floodplain forests, not just into disturbed areas. Invaded sites undergo a decline on native herbaceous cover within 10 years. Garlic mustard alters habitat suitability for native insects and thereby birds and mammals. This European exotic plant occurs now in 27 midwestern and north-eastern states and in Canada. Garlic mustard is on the MDA Prohibited noxious weeds list in Minnesota.

WHAT IS GARLIC MUSTARD?

Garlic Mustard is a biennial herbaceous plant with weak single stems growing 1 to 3 feet high in its second and flowering year. Garlic mustard is the only plant of this height blooming white in wooded environments in May. Its leaves are round, scallop-edged and dark green. During the plants first year it has rosettes of 3 or 4 leaves. Second year plants have alternate stem leaves. Leaves and stems smell like onion or garlic when crushed. White, small and

numerous flowers appear on the plant with four separate petals. Each plant has one or two flowering stems on second year plants. The plant produces seeds that are slender capsules 1 to 2 1/2 inches in length, containing a single row of oblong black seeds. Seeds are viable in the soil for 5 years.



CONTROL METHODS

In areas with light infestation pulling of the plant and cutting of the flowering stem at ground level is sufficient. Prescribed burning also helps if there is enough fuel to carry the flames. Garlic mustard can also be treated with a spot application of 2% glyphosate in early spring or late fall when native plants are dormant.