

NOT-WANTED!

Garlic Mustard

Alliaria petiolata

YOU CAN HELP PREVENT THE SPREAD!



Plant



Leaves: First Year



Second Year



Flowers



Seed Pods

Photos: minnesotawildflowers.info

Garlic mustard, a biennial from Europe, has been spreading into wild areas in Minnesota for several years. This species is allelopathic: it produces chemicals to prohibit growth of other nearby plant species, leading to decline or absence of native wildflowers in our woodlands. Spring plants have a strong garlic odor when crushed. Tiny **seeds** in the soil are carried to new areas on the bottoms of deer hooves, footwear and tires. Infestation of an area is aided by deer, earthworms and the presence of invasive buckthorn. Plants photosynthesize and grow soon after snow melt, quickly bolting to produce flowers with warmer temperatures. Once flowers are formed, plants will produce seeds, even if pulled from the ground.

First year plants form a basal rosette with rounded, violet or creeping Charlie-like, toothed **leaves**. Second year bolting plants develop pointed leaf tips and grow **a few inches to 4 feet tall**. **Blooms** from late April to June. White, **flowers**, up to 1/3" wide, with four petals, grow in clusters at the top of the plant. Thin, upright seed pods reach a length of 2". Seeds are viable in the soil for several years.

Control methods: Garlic mustard is more likely to establish in areas where buckthorn is pulled rather than cut and treated with herbicide. Prevent spread by carrying a shoe brush/pick to clean footwear or tires when riding, hiking or foraging (always ask permission to forage on public lands). Garlic mustard is resistant to herbicide treatment. It may be pulled and left to dry, roots up. If blooming, pile in the center of the patch to concentrate next year's seedlings for ease of removal. Weed torching is effective on spring seedlings, but should be done with caution and a means to extinguish burning leaves and twigs. Mowing before blooming may prevent seed production. Mowing after flowers open spreads seeds. **Biocontrols** have been extensively researched, approved and may be available for release, perhaps as early as 2021.

Ramsey
Conservation District

For more information contact:

Carole Gernes, Coordinator
Ramsey County Cooperative Weed Management Area
carole.gernes@rwmwd.org
651-792-7977

