

# Garlic Mustard

(*Alliaria petiolata*)



## Key ID Features

**Arrangement:** alternate

**Leaves:** kidney to triangular shaped toothed leaves; crushed plant smells of garlic

**Flowers:** small, white with four petals

**Fruit:** long slender seed pods

**Stem:** purple on young plants

**Root:** white s-shaped tap root

**Growth Habit:** herbaceous biennial; spends first year as a rosette and bolts and flowers in 2nd year, can grow 4 ft. tall



## The Impact

Garlic Mustard (also called “Garlicwort”) was first reported in 1868, growing in Long Island, NY. From there, and from potential other points of introduction (popular garden and medicinal herb), it escaped cultivation and spread across North America.

Garlic Mustard grows in dense populations in the forest understory where it outcompetes native plants for water, light, nutrients, and space. Its success stems from the production of up to 8,000 seeds per plant in a season, and the roots release chemicals into the soil that inhibit the growth of other plants (allelopathy).

Garlic Mustard is also toxic to the West Virginia White butterfly caterpillars (species of special concern in Vermont). The butterfly normally lays its eggs on native Toothwort but gets it confused with Garlic Mustard due to their similar chemical signaling to the insects.

## Quick Facts

**Plant Family:** Brassicaceae

**Origin:** Europe

**Habitat:** disturbed areas, found in the undergrowth of forests and forest edges

**Present in Vermont?:** yes

**Method of Spread:** primarily by seeds

**Status:** Class B Noxious Weed\*  
<http://bit.ly/VTPlantQuarantine>

*\*The Vermont Noxious Weed Quarantine listing means it is illegal to buy, sell, or transport this species in Vermont*

## Native Plant Alternatives



**Foam Flower**  
(*Tiarella cordifolia*): attracts bees and bee flies, grows in rich woodlands



**Common Boneset**  
(*Eupatorium perfoliatum*): attracts butterflies, bees and flies, grows on stream edges, wetlands

## Invasive: Garlic Mustard



## Common Look-alikes

### Toothwort



### Distinguishing features

**Leaf:** leaves are lobed

### Violet



### Distinguishing features

**Flower:** blue, violet, yellow, or white

## Control Information

To learn more about identification & control options, check out the Gallery of Land Invasives on ***VTinvasives.org*** and these additional resources:

<https://www.kingcounty.gov/services/environment/animals-and-plants/noxious-weeds/weed-identification/garlic-mustard.aspx>

References: EDDMaps Ontario - Species - Garlic Mustard, Ontario's Invading Species Awareness Program - Garlic Mustard, Ohio State University Weed Guide - Garlic Mustard, New York Invasive Species Information - Garlic Mustard, Noxious Weeds in King County, Washington - Garlic Mustard

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