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# Garlic Mustard

*Alliaria petiolata*



Garlic mustard starts out with green, heart-shaped leaves in a crown on the ground. It dies back in winter, then bolts the second year with a flower stalk. Crushed plant parts smell like garlic.

- Leaves are 1-6" long, and heart-shaped the first year, but become more triangular-shaped by the 2<sup>nd</sup> year.
  - Flowers show up the second year on a 1-4' stalk, with 4 small white, cross-shaped petals in April-May.
  - Seeds are tiny and black inside a green skinny pod, which turns beige when mature. The plant dies, but the seeds take over. Several hundred per plant remain viable for up to 6 years.
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## HOW TO CONTROL:

Garlic Mustard is not considered a weed in its native country where natural enemies keep it in check, but biological controls are not yet considered effective here.

- Hand pull the entire plant when soil is wet and before seed capsules have formed. You can smell the garlic aroma as you pull. Tamp down soil to discourage seeding. If seed capsules have formed, bag plants and dispose in trash. Continue for 5 years until seed bank is exhausted.
- For larger infestations: Try not to disturb soil. Instead, mow/weed-whack to ground level when plants are in flower (late spring/early summer), before seeds appear. Repeat for at least 5 years.
- Herbicide treatment, if beyond 25' from water: Spray 1%-2% glyphosate to leaves when above 50°F and before flowering.

**NOTE:** Garlic Mustard exudes chemicals that inhibit the ability of surrounding plants to grow.

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## Sources

### Garlic Mustard

[https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mnap/features/invasive\\_plants/alliaria.htm](https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mnap/features/invasive_plants/alliaria.htm);

<https://extension.umaine.edu/publications/2526e/>;

[https://wiki.bugwood.org/Archive:BCIPEUS/Alliaria\\_petiolata](https://wiki.bugwood.org/Archive:BCIPEUS/Alliaria_petiolata)

### Controls

<https://extension.umaine.edu/publications/2526e/>;

[https://wiki.bugwood.org/Archive:BCIPEUS/Alliaria\\_petiolata](https://wiki.bugwood.org/Archive:BCIPEUS/Alliaria_petiolata);

Casco Bay Invasive Species Network, Winning the War on Weeds (p. 18)

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