

All About Garlic Mustard

Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*)

What is it?

Garlic mustard is a biennial plant (meaning it has a 2 year growth pattern) that crowds out other native plants in our parks. It has heart shaped leaves, small 4-petaled white flowers and typically grows 1-4 feet tall. It also has a garlicky smell, and was introduced in the 1800s by European settlers as an edible herb and for medicinal uses.

First and second year plants look strikingly different! See photos below. We will mainly focus on pulling second year plants, as first year plants do not yet contain seeds.

What can we do about it?

Remove it if you see it! It's best to remove garlic mustard by hand to reduce soil disturbance. To reduce chances of seed dispersal, it's best to pull garlic mustard before seed heads ripen. In Minnesota, this means pulling it between April and June. In Saint Paul parks, we remove garlic mustard carefully by hand to ensure we get the entire root system. If part of the root is left in the ground, it can regrow!



Did you know? Garlic mustard seeds can persist up to 5 years in the soil! Long-term efforts are necessary to get rid of this nasty invader.

Check out this [video](#) to see what kind of habitat to expect when you volunteer with us! Thank you in advance for your help!

