



THE UPPER GREAT LAKES CENTER FOR EXOTIC SPECIES

Quick Guide

MichiganTech.

Garlic Mustard, *Alliaria petiolata*.

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Description

- This exotic biennial herb from the mustard family (Brassicaceae) has triangular to heart-shaped leaves that give off a garlic odor when crushed.
- Produces clusters of small white flowers with four petals in the shape of a cross and can reach up to 4 feet in height.
- Starting in May seeds are produced inside of slender, shiny black pods which stand erect, making them easily recognizable.

Ecological Threat

- Poses a severe threat to native plant communities by out competing for resources such as light, moisture, nutrients, soil and space.
- Wildlife species are deprived of food sources when garlic mustard excludes native plant species.
- Garlic mustard can self-pollinate and scatter thousands of seeds. One plant can rapidly invade a large area.



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Prospects for Management

- Because garlic mustard seeds can persist in the soil for over five years a long term commitment to management is necessary.
- Hand removal of plants is the most effective method if the area is small and the infestation is not too severe.
- Preventing the shipment of trees from nurseries in infected areas could help to limit the spread.