

Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*)



Figure 1. First year rosette



Figure 2. 2nd year plant in flower



Figure 3. Mature plant with seed pods.

Garlic mustard was introduced from Europe as a culinary and medicinal plant. Garlic mustard is a biennial plant with a two-year life cycle.

Identification

First year plants form a rosette of round, scalloped-margined leaves that stay semi-evergreen through winter. The second year, it sends up a flower stem with triangular toothed leaves that bears tiny white flowers with four petals. The plant dies after producing long narrow seedpods. At maturity, garlic mustard plants may be 3 to 4 ft. tall and bear up to 500 seeds per plant.

Control Methods

Hand-pull or dig out plants, repeating over several years since garlic mustard seeds can survive in the soil for up to 7 years. Do not compost the plants because most compost piles do not get hot enough to kill the seeds.

In the city of Madison, small amounts can be placed in a plastic bag and placed in your tan refuse cart. Larger amounts should be bagged in plastic and taken to the City's yard waste drop off sites. Inform the attendant that it is garlic mustard so that it is not composted. In other municipalities call the Bureau of Endangered Resources at 608-266-7012 for permission to landfill garlic mustard.

Additional Information/Resources

- UW Extension Garden Fact Sheet [XHT1081 Garlic Mustard](#)
- Dane County UW Extension Horticulture Hotline [608-224-3721](tel:608-224-3721) (M-F, 9 am-12 noon, April 15 – October 31) or horticulture@countyofdane.com