

# WANTED: INVASIVE ALIEN

## Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*)

**Description:** This European biennial plant grows to 3 feet or more at maturity. The first-year rosettes grow close to the ground and stay green all winter. The second year plants have many small, white, four-petaled flowers at the top of the plant which become long capsules producing as many as 3,000 seeds per plant. When crushed, the leaves have a distinctive garlic-like odor.

**Environmental Threat:** Garlic mustard seeds remain viable for many years and the plant can quickly dominate the landscape where it is not controlled. It chokes out native wildflowers, depletes soil nutrients, and destroys beneficial mycorrhizal fungi. It is difficult to control because of its seed production/viability and its ability to spread.

**Known Locations:** Garlic mustard is found along roads, fence lines and in gardens and natural areas. Its tiny seeds cling to animal fur, shoes, boots, socks and pant cuffs.

**What you can do:** Clean your shoes and clothes after hiking or venturing into native areas where garlic mustard may grow. Pull the plants by hand, focusing on second-year plants to prevent seed production. Be sure to pull the majority of the root to prevent resprouting. DO NOT COMPOST GARLIC MUSTARD! Put it in plastic bags for the trash.



Tom Heutte, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org



Chris Evans, River to River CWMA, Bugwood.org