

THIS INVASIVE PLANT IS NOW FOUND IN THE LAKE GEORGE WATERSHED

GARLIC MUSTARD

Garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) is an invasive plant that is traditionally native to Europe, Asia, and Africa. It has now been found within the Lake George watershed, even in small patches on some of the islands on the lake. It's a biennial (two-year life cycle) plant in the mustard family, that can degrade local plant communities as it produces chemicals that inhibit the growth of mycorrhizal fungi that are needed for tree health and seedling survival. Garlic mustard is adapted to take advantage of disturbed habitats, where it out-competes native species. Garlic mustard was first introduced in the 1860s in the USA as a culinary herb.

Garlic mustard grows in its first year as a small cluster of 3 or 4 kidney shaped leaves in a small rosette. The second year plants will produce one or more flowering stems that contain sharply toothed leaves and four petaled white



Garlic mustard is an invasive plant that can take over a disturbed area. It prevents trees and seedlings from establishing and growing.

flowers on the top of each stem that are produced in May. Garlic mustard will grow to 1-4 feet tall from a deep taproot. When the leaves and stem are crushed they smell like garlic or onions. The smell is most predominant in young plants. The leaves, flowers and fruit are edible and have been used as medicine. A single plant can produce hundreds of small shiny black seeds. Seeds remain viable

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Garlic Mustard

LAKE GEORGE FACT SHEET

for seven years or more. Seeds are produced in slender pods called siliques, which form just below the flowers. Seeds require prolonged exposure to the cold before they can germinate.

Garlic mustard dominates the understory of forested areas by growing early in the spring. The rapid growth displaces native woodland flowers, and alters habitat quality for salamanders and other forest floor inhabitants. Garlic mustard releases chemicals in the soil that depress the growth of grasses and other herbs. It tolerates low light levels, and is able to invade undisturbed forest habitat that is located near a disturbed area.

Human activity transports garlic mustard seeds on boots, clothing, by mowing, ATV use, and other activities that take place in infested areas. Garlic mustard can be found in deciduous forests that are partly shaded, moist habitats and areas that have been altered by human activity.

Adult plants can be pulled in late spring when the flowers are in bloom. It's important to monitor the location and pull any first year growth. This monitoring should take place for several years until all successive seed growth has been



Human activity transports garlic mustard seeds on shoes and clothing, by lawn mowing or weed-whacking, ATV or tractor use, among other ways.

removed. Removal and monitoring of garlic mustard populations is very time and labor intensive. As with other invasive species, spread prevention is very important. It's important to monitor your property and roadsides that you frequent to make sure that garlic mustard growth is identified early on. Here are some tips to help stop the spread of garlic mustard:

- Landscape with native plants;
- Remove invasive plants from your property;
- Never compost terrestrial invasive plants;
- Avoid disturbing the land such as the removal of riparian or stream buffers; and,
- Know the source of your fill and mulch.

We need your help to protect Lake George from invasive species.

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