

Garlic Mustard

Why is it so important to pull, bag, and dispose of Garlic Mustard? This beastly invasive was brought to North America by European settlers as a medicinal and culinary herb. By now, garlic mustard is destroying forests and killing butterflies in 34 states, ranging from the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic to the Mid-west and into the Pacific Northwest and Alaska. Garlic mustard has displaced native wildflowers such as spring beauty, wild ginger, bloodroot, trillium, and toothworts in vast forested areas. This is because it grows so vigorously in early spring and fall that it out-competes them. Also, this weed is not eaten by any insects or animals in North America, unlike in its native Europe, where browsing by herbivores and munching by insects keeps it under control.

Several butterfly species have become threatened because their wildflower hosts are now rare due to incursion by GM. Other butterflies are endangered because they lay their eggs on GM instead of on their host plants, and GM's leaves poison their larvae. Also, garlic mustard taints the soil with toxins, inhibiting forest tree regeneration. Within 10 years of its arrival in an area, garlic mustard can take over the forest floor.

It's very easy to pull up, especially after it rains. Just grab it by the base and tug gently but firmly and make sure you get the tap root. Then BAG IT and dispose of it. If you don't, the plant can continue to produce and disperse its seeds even after you've pulled it up — and each plant produces thousands of seeds — so don't leave it lying around and

DO NOT compost it!

Garlic Mustard is classified as HIGH invasive risk on the Virginia Invasive Species Plant List from the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. More information:

<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/invspinfo>

<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/document/nh-invasive-plant-list-2014.pdf>

<https://blueridgeprism.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Garlic-Mustard-Factsheet-5-27-17-VDOF-W-Box-FINAL.pdf>

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/sites/parks/files/assets/documents/naturalcultural/non-native-invasive-id-control-booklet.pdf>



Figure 1: Garlic Mustard Floweret



Figure 2: Carpet of garlic mustard



Figure 3: Garlic mustard chokes out all other plant species



Figure 4: Garlic mustard patch



Figure 5: Garlic mustard plant in bloom