

Garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) is an invasive weed native to Europe, Asia, & North Africa. Originally imported as a medicinal and edible herb, it was first recognized growing wild on Long Island in 1868. Since then, it has spread across North America at a rate of **4000mi² per year**. Garlic mustard is a biennial plant, meaning it completes its life cycle in two years. True to its name, garlic mustard has a potent **garlic-horseradish flavor**.



Garlic mustard flowers



Young leaves on first-year plants

Identification. First year plants grow in circular clusters 4-6 inches high, with heart-shaped leaves and purple stems. Leaves of first year plants stay green throughout the winter. Second year plants shoot up in early to mid spring, usually forming four-petaled **white flowers** by mid-May and seed pods by late May. Mature plants can grow up to 3.5 feet tall.

Did you know? Garlic mustard plants exude chemical compounds into the soil that inhibit the growth of neighboring plants, including both native trees and wildflowers. This trait is called **allelopathy**, and plays an important role in garlic mustard's ability to invade even mature forests. These compounds are also unpalatable to most North American herbivores.



Garlic mustard patch in Canton, NY

Rubbing garlic mustard leaves together will reveal a distinct garlic odor. Try it!

Control and Management.

Garlic mustard can be controlled by manually pulling it from the ground before its seeds have dropped in early summer. The upper half of the root must be pulled to ensure the plant will not regrow. Seeds can continue to survive in the soil for **7-10 years**, so pulling efforts must be continued for many consecutive years.

Bag pulled plants and **leave in sun for 2 full weeks to dry before disposing. Never leave plants in a pile on the ground, where they might re-sprout.*



An edible invasive. Garlic mustard is not only edible, it's nutritious! It's packed with vitamins A and C, zinc, carotenoids, and fiber, and can add an extra kick to salads, sautés, and pestos. You'll want to avoid harvesting garlic mustard growing near roads, and to cook the leaves slightly to degrade compounds in the leaves that contain trace levels of cyanide.

Nature Up North's Garlic Mustard Pesto



- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 cup garlic mustard leaves, blanched
- 1 cup basil leaves
- ¼ cup walnuts
- 1 cup olive oil (more if needed)
- ½ cup shaved parmesan cheese
- 1 tbsp. apple cider vinegar
- 1 tbsp. maple syrup

Directions: Blanch garlic mustard leaves. Combine basil, garlic mustard, garlic, and walnuts in food processor and pulse until loosely chopped. Add cider vinegar, maple syrup, and olive oil and blend smooth. Pour into bowl and stir in parmesan cheese, lemon juice, salt, and pepper to taste. **Enjoy!**