

Garlic Mustard

Great Groundcover or an **INVASIVE?**

Invasive



Common names: Mustard root, garlic root and garlicwort

Scientific names: *Alliaria officianalis*, *Alliaria alliaria* and *Arabis peiolata*

DESCRIPTION

Garlic mustard is a cool season biennial herb with stalked, triangular to heart-shaped, coarsely toothed leaves. First-year plants appear as a rosette of green leaves close to the ground. The following spring mature plants reach 2 to 3-½ feet in height and produce buttonlike clusters of small white flowers, each with four petals in the shape of a cross. Beginning in May (in the mid-Atlantic Coast Plain region), seeds are produced in erect, slender pods and become shiny black when mature. By late June, when most garlic mustard plants have died, they can be recognized only by the erect stalks of dry, pale brown seedpods that remain, and may hold viable seed, through the summer.

ECOLOGICAL THREAT

Garlic mustard poses a severe threat to native plants and animals in forest communities in much of the eastern and midwestern U.S.. Many native wildflowers complete their life cycles in the springtime and occur in the same habitat as garlic mustard. Once introduced to an area, garlic mustard outcompetes native plants by aggressively monopolizing light