



*First year rosette*

## History

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Introduced in the mid-1800s, from Europe and Asian, garlic mustard has invaded the forests of the Northeast, Midwest, and Northwest United States.

One of the earliest bloomers, garlic mustard emerges before our native plants and outcompete them for sunlight, nutrients, and water. This advantage will strengthen as climate change lengthens our growing seasons. Garlic mustard releases chemicals from its roots that inhibit the growth of native plants and deter deer from consuming them. Garlic mustard also impacts our native insects by outcompeting food sources for some caterpillars and producing chemicals toxic to some butterfly eggs.

Garlic Mustard has invaded many of our forests, backyards, and roadsides.

## Culinary Uses

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The whole plant is edible, depending on what time of year you harvest it. The young leaves of garlic mustard can be eaten raw in salads or used as a cooked vegetable, like spinach or kale. The roots can be washed and eaten raw or boiled like other root vegetables similar to horseradish. They can also be dried and ground into a powder for flavoring soups, sauces, and baked goods. Some people believe the best part of the plant is the top flower buds before the plant goes to seed.

## Garlic Mustard Pesto

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Ingredients:

- Chopped and blanched garlic mustard greens
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Toasted Pepitas
- Garlic cloves
- Parmesan cheese
- Salt, to taste

Instructions:

1. Collect garlic mustard. Wash it thoroughly. Remove the stems and leaves from the plant. Blanch the cleaned leaves in boiling water for 2 minutes.
2. Strain the garlic mustard using a colander.
3. Add blanched leaves, two crushed cloves of garlic and 1/2 cup of parmesan cheese to a food processor.
4. Blend until the mixture is smooth while slowly adding olive oil to get the consistency you want.
5. Add salt or pepper to taste.
6. Serve with pasta.

# Garlic Mustard

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That white spring flower  
in your backyard



Sudbury Conservation Department

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## How to Identify Garlic Mustard

Garlic mustard is a biennial plant, with a white tap root. In the first year, garlic mustard forms small round rosettes near the ground. In the second year, the plant forms heart-shaped leaves and a tall flowering stem with small, white, four-petaled flowers emerging in May. Seeds can remain viable in the soil for at least five years. Like many invasive plants, eradication will take persistence over a few years.

By late June, the dying 3-foot high stalks, have faded leaves and are recognizable by their pale brown seed pods that may hold viable seeds through the summer.

There are a number of similar looking plants including kidney leaf buttercup, violets, and ground ivy. If you are not sure, rub the leaves between your fingers. Garlic mustard has a distinct garlic odor.



*Flower*



*Second Year Leaf*

## How to Control Garlic Mustard

Garlic Mustard is easy to remove manually. A good time to pull garlic is after it rains. While the ground is still soft and the soil moist, grab the plant firmly at its base and pull the plant gently from the ground, ensuring you remove the entire root. Bag pulled plants in a paper bag and throw them in the garbage; do not compost. The objective is to remove the flowering plants, before they start forming seeds. The plant will continue to flower and set seed even after being pulled.

You can also call the Conservation Office to schedule an appointment to dispose of your filled paper bags at our facility. We currently accept garlic mustard only.

## Prevent Further Spread

Clean shoes, pockets, pants cuffs and equipment thoroughly after walking or working in infested areas. Garlic mustard seeds are tiny and are often carried off in clothing, shoes and mud.



*Seed Pods*

## Medicinal Use

As with most things, garlic mustard is not all bad. Garlic mustard was brought here for its medicinal uses. Historically, garlic mustard was used to treat ailments ranging from bronchitis to gangrene. Garlic mustard has been used as an antiseptic herb for treating leg ulcers, bruises and sores, coughs and colds, clearing a stuffy head, to encourage sweating and even as a cure for colic and kidney stones. More relevant to us today, you can crush the leaves and create a poultice to relieve the itch from your mosquito bites.



*Second Year Plant*

*Root*