



Weed of the Month for February 2017

Garlic Mustard (*Alliara petiolata*)

Origin: Europe

Interesting Fact: Garlic Mustard was brought over as a culinary plant originally.

Description: Garlic Mustard is a biennial, herbaceous plant. First year basal rosettes have kidney shaped leaves with large, coarse teeth. Second year plants have alternate leaves and white, four-petaled flowers that develop into long, slender seed pods (siliques).

Defining characteristics:

- Pungent smell from leaves when crushed
- Small, white flowers with 4 petals
- Long siliques (defining characteristics of plants in the Mustard family)
- Kidney shaped basal rosette leaves with large, coarse teeth.



(Left top image) Garlic Mustard siliques.

(Left bottom image) Garlic Mustard flowers.

(Right image) A large patch of second year Garlic Mustard plants.



Habitat: Found in disturbed areas, roadsides, flood plains, riparian areas, and open woods.

Some first year Garlic Mustard plants along Kelso Creek in Vincennes.



Ecological threat: Garlic Mustard is a prolific seed producer, and these seeds remain viable for many years. In addition, Garlic Mustard uses allelopathic chemicals to inhibit other plants.

Control Methods:

- Manual: Can be relatively easy to pull or grub out with a garden tool, but want to make sure you get the entire taproot. (Optimal time to pull is before the plant flowers. If it's flowering or has seed pods, you'll need to bag it.)
- Chemical: Foliar herbicide applications are recommended for large patches of Garlic Mustard. A foliar spray with glyphosate (aka Roundup) works well for this. (Want to also spray before the plant flowers, definitely before it has siliques.)

References

Kaufman, Sylvan R. and Wallace Kaufman. 2012. *Invasive Plants*. Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books. Print.