

Garlic Mustard

Invasive Plant Fact Sheet

DESCRIPTION

Garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) is a biennial herbaceous plant.

First-year basal rosettes feature rounded toothed leaves up to four inches in diameter and remain green through the winter. Second year stalks emerge in spring and are adorned with triangular alternately arranged leaves and small white four-petaled flowers.

After pollination, seed pods form vertically arranged along the stem. The stems and pods turn brown after ripening, signaling the death of the plant.

WHY IS IT BAD

Garlic mustard outcompetes native plant communities. It emerges very early in the spring, blocking sunlight and stealing nutrients and moisture before native species can evenlt releases chemicals through its roots (allelopathy) that stop other plants and beneficial mycorrhizal fungi from growing.

DISTRIBUTION & SPREAD

Reproduces by seed only. An average, single plant produces between 600-7,500 seeds. Soil disturbance aids in seed germination and establishment; populations are greater in disturbed sites.

CONTROL METHODS

When feasible, removing the second year plants as the stalks emerge each spring will control the infestation.

Contact after the seed pods have ripened can spread infestation when pods pop open and disperse seeds. Mature plants may continue to flower and go to seed after being uprooted, so cut off the root after pulling.

A garlic mustard brush pile left in an area that can be monitored for Regrowth / seedlings will decompose in a couple of seasons. Do not transport seeds/pods off-site unless they are sealed in bags.



Example of a mature plant



Example of a juvenile plant



To learn more about invasives in Medford, scan the QR code or visit <https://bit.ly/02155Invasives>

POST TREATMENT

Monitor the site each spring for a few years and pull mature plants before they go to seed.

Stabilize the space with native groundcovers such as Canada windflower (*Anemone canadensis*), Plantain pussytoes (*Antennaria plantaginifolia*), running groundsel (*Packera obovata*), big leaf aster (*Eurybia macrophylla*), or running foam flower (*Tiarella cordifolia* var. *cordifolia*).

Keep Medford Beautiful is a community effort initiated by Mayor Breanna Lungo-Koehn to organize local volunteers to help clean up and beautify the city's streets and public spaces.



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