

Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*)

Description

A biennial that starts its first year with a slender taproot and a rosette of kidney-shaped, dark-green leaves that stay green through the winter. Second year plants can grow up to 1 m tall. The leaves are stalked, triangular to heart-shaped, with a coarsely toothed margin. Each small flower has four white petals arranged in a “cross” shape. The fruit is an erect, slender, four-sided pod, called a silique, green maturing pale grey-brown, containing two rows of small shiny black seeds which are released when the pod splits open.



Key Identifiers

- ✓ One of first plants to be green in the spring.
- ✓ White flowers with petals in cross shape.
- ✓ Coarsely toothed triangular to heart-shaped leaves.
- ✓ Root kink, sometimes described as “s” curve at top of root.
- ✓ Crushed leaf sometimes smells like garlic or onion.



Location in Canada

Garlic Mustard is well established in B.C, ON and QUE. Alberta has isolated populations found in Edmonton and St. Albert.

Resources

<http://www.invasiveplants.ab.ca/Downloads/FS-GarlicMustard.pdf>

THE BIOLOGY OF CANADIAN WEEDS. 35. *Alliaria petiolata*

http://www.ontarioweeds.com/media/pdf/garlic_natureconservatory.pdf

<http://weedinfo.ca/weed.php?w=ALAPE>

Similar species

Viola sp. - Garlic mustard can be distinguished by its garlic odor (spring & summer), slender white taproot with a crook or "S" shape just below the base of the stem.

http://www.em.ca/garden/native/nat_Viola%20canadensis%20var%20rugulosa.html

Dame's rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*) - Can be confused when the flowers are white, which happens occasionally.

Flowers of dame's rocket are much larger and showier than those of garlic mustard, its leaves are lance-shaped and crushed foliage does have a garlic odor. <http://www.invasiveplants.ab.ca/Downloads/FS-DamesRocket.pdf>

Wild & Dog Mustard - Mature garlic mustard plants are distinguished from Wild mustard

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/facts/03-043.htm> by their seedpods being more slender and having a slender beak that is never broad or flattened, and never containing an additional seed or two. In some plants of Garlic mustard the lower most 1-3 flowers or seedpods may be in the axils of small leaves, a characteristic it shares only with Dog mustard.

http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/facts/ontweeds/dog_mustard.htm