

Spring Is The Perfect Time To Control Nuisance Plants

(A reminder about Garlic Mustard Identification and Control from the Portage Environmental Board)

Garlic Mustard is an invasive plant throughout the Midwest and Michigan. It is a herbaceous biennial plant that grows one to three feet tall the second year and flowers. It is the only plant with white flowers of four petals that smells like garlic.

Garlic Mustard grows anywhere and everywhere, as a single plant the first year to a carpet of plants the following year. Its rapid growth shades out the native plants and it destroys the mycorrhizal fungi in the soil needed by woody plants for seed regeneration. Garlic Mustard is capable of stifling new forest growth. The long slender seed pods contain millions of seeds which remain viable for seven to ten years. The seeds are carried by the wind, on the fur and hooves of animals, on our clothes and the soles of our shoes.

Some Do's and Don'ts for containing Garlic Mustard:

- Do:** Pull solitary and small infestations by hand, be careful not to disperse soil, place pulled plants in a black garbage bag for disposal.
- Do:** Work from edge of infestation to center to prevent the spreading of seeds that collect on clothes and shoes.
- Do:** Empty pant cuffs and clean shoes before leaving a work area.
- Do:** When possible mow large carpeted areas of Garlic Mustard. Mow before the plants flower; continue mowing over several years until the plants no longer emerge in the spring.
- Don't:** Put plants in compost or lawn recycling pickup. The pulled Garlic Mustard plants will live for weeks in the black garbage bags. The bags need to be buried deep in a land fill or the plants will sprout and spread.