



**INVADER #1 of 4:**  
**GARLIC  
MUSTARD**  
*Alliaria petiolata*

## HOW YOU CAN STOP GARLIC MUSTARD

- 1 Get rid of it**  
Before garlic mustard goes to seed, pull up whole plants — including the roots — by hand. (Wear gloves for protection.) That means prime pulling season is early spring. Spring rains' damp soils also ease the tug.
- 2 Stop the spread**  
If you pull before it flowers, let the garlic mustard decay where it is. But if it's flowered or gone to seed, bag what you've pulled and bring to an MDA-approved noxious weed composting site. Better yet, if the site is free of chemicals and cars, steam up these greens or make some pesto!
- 3 Follow up (for five years!) and replant**  
Pull seedlings and young growth. Plant native plants like bloodroot or wild ginger to compete with garlic mustard and help restore habitat for wildlife.

# HOW TO IDENTIFY GARLIC MUSTARD

Look for it in: woodlands + along waterways + disturbed areas



In its first year, garlic mustard grows in a “basal rosette,” without flowers. Its heart-shaped, deep-veined, toothed leaves remain low to the ground.



In its second year, the plant shoots upward (or “bolts” as botanists say) to about 1-3’ with alternate leaves. Leaves emit a strong garlic smell when crushed.



At the stem’s top, white blooms of four rounded petals grow in clusters an inch or more across. Flowers usually appear in May and June.



Starting around June, flowers turn to fruit: thin pods up to 2” long that curve upward. (Don’t spread the oblong black seeds within those pods!)



Learn more and sign up to volunteer at [fmr.org](http://fmr.org).

Illustrations by Isaac Passwater (@isaacpasswaterillustration) for FMR