



# Garlic Mustard

*Alliaria petiolata*

**Invasive  
Plant  
Alert**

One of the biggest threats to natural ecosystems in Saanich is the spread of invasive non-native plants. The District of Saanich appreciates the cooperation of all residents in removing Garlic Mustard from private property.

*For assistance, see contacts on reverse.*

**Considered one of the most  
invasive plants in Canada.**



## **Why is Garlic Mustard a problem?**

- Garlic Mustard is a serious threat to natural habitats and biodiversity.
- Dominates understorey vegetation, monopolizing light, moisture and soil nutrients.
- Produces phytotoxins (chemicals) inhibiting growth of other plants and trees.
- Has been shown to disrupt the lifecycles of butterflies and salamanders in other areas of North America.
- A prolific seed producer with seeds remaining viable for 5-10 years in soil; also self-pollinating (single seed produces new invasion).

## **What does it look like?**

- First year: lower growing carpets of heart-shaped leaves with scalloped margins, remaining green over winter.
- Second year: grow to over 1m tall; mature leaves triangular with scalloped margins becoming smaller towards top of plant.
- Flowers: clusters of small white 4-petaled flowers at top of stem, usually one flowering stalk per plant.
- Garlic odour when crushed.
- **Look for:** White flowers (April to September), garlic odour, purple base of the stems and roots.

## **Could be confused with:**

- Wild Violet (*Viola* spp)
- Fringecup (*Tellima grandiflora*)
- Nipplewort (*Lapsana communis*)
- Money Plant (*Lunaria annua*)
- Sweet Cicely (*Osmorhiza berteroi*)
- Avens (*Geum* spp)

## **Distribution:**

- Native to Europe and Asia.
- Eastern Canada: a species of major concern, has devastated forest ecosystems.
- A newer invader to BC: the regional goal is to eradicate due to current distribution and high priority.



# Invasive Plant Alert



## Other resources

Invasive Species Council of BC  
Coastal Invasive Species Committee  
King County Noxious Weed Program  
Report-a-Weed BC

## Habitat and biology:

- Known as a biennial in the Brassicacea (mustard) family, can grow in this region as an annual (flowering in first year).
- Predominantly in forest areas, wooded stream banks and disturbed areas, tolerates a wide variety of conditions including shade.
- Reproduces by seed and re-sprouting from cut stems and roots.
- The main flowering period is April through June within some continued flowering through the summer.
- Seed-set on early flowering starts around June with up to 1000 seeds per plant.

## What should you do?

- **Spread the word, not the plant:** don't buy or plant Garlic Mustard.
- **Inform:** please contact Saanich (as below) to report locations.
- **Stop seed spread:** brush/clean off clothing, tires and equipment before leaving the infested area.
- **Remove:** if you have properly identified Garlic Mustard on your property, use the best control methods (below) to eliminate it.
- **Monitor:** annually return to the site (spring & fall) for several years to continue treatment.
- **Replant:** after effectively eliminating this species over time, replant with non-invasive plants (such as appropriate native species).
- **Volunteer:** find out more about volunteering to control priority invasive species with Saanich at [www.saanich.ca/pullingtogether](http://www.saanich.ca/pullingtogether).

## Small infestations

- Hand-pull starting in winter or early spring when soil is moist and before seeds develop. Remove as much of the root as possible and minimize soil disturbance during removal.
- Apply a thick layer of mulch over the area to suppress new growth.
- Monitor regularly for re-growth and remove any new plants.

## Large infestations

- Please contact Saanich Environmental Services for assistance.

## Proper Disposal

- The District of Saanich is in the process of developing options for invasive species disposal. Please call Environmental Services or check the website for updates [www.invasives.saanich.ca](http://www.invasives.saanich.ca).
- Currently, the best option is to place all plant parts in garbage bags labelled "invasive species" and take to Hartland Landfill.
- **DO NOT COMPOST!** Home composting is likely to increase the spread of this species.

## Who do you call?

Contact Saanich for assistance and more information about Garlic Mustard, other invasive plants and volunteer opportunities.

### On Private Land

Saanich Environmental Services:  
250-475-5471 or [planning@saanich.ca](mailto:planning@saanich.ca)

### On Public Lands

Saanich Parks:  
250-475-5522 or [parcs@saanich.ca](mailto:parcs@saanich.ca)

[www.invasives.saanich.ca](http://www.invasives.saanich.ca)

## Noxious Weeds Bylaw No. 8080:

The District of Saanich requires all landowners clear their property of any noxious weeds and other vegetation that could spread or become a nuisance