

CENTRAL JERSEY INVASIVE SPECIES STRIKE TEAM

Invasive Plant Fact Sheet

Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*)



Family name: Mustard family (*Brassicaceae*)

Native range: Europe

General: Herbaceous biennial that reaches about 2 to 3½ feet tall. Forms dense stands of first and second year plants.

Leaves: The first year plants appear as basal rosettes of rounded leaves about 2.5 to 4 inches long and wide. These leaves remain green through winter. Second year plants send up a flower stalk in spring with alternate, triangular to heart-shaped leaves. All leaves are coarsely toothed and smell of garlic when crushed.

Flowers: White, 0.25 inch cross-shaped, four petaled, appearing in April to June.

Fruit: Small, shiny black seeds are contained within slender pods. Ripening from late May to June. After bearing seed, the plant dies. Seeds may continue to mature even after plants have been pulled from the ground.

Look-alikes: None.

Habitat: Forest, forest edges, hedgerows, lawns, roadsides. Prefers moist shaded environments like forests, but tolerates a variety of conditions.



Threats to native habitats: Garlic mustard produces abundant seeds and quickly carpets forest floors, displacing native herbs. Garlic mustard also changes soil composition by interfering with mycorrhizal fungi, which is essential to mineral uptake by eastern deciduous trees and seed germination of some species of native herbs.

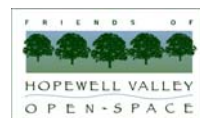
NJ Status: Garlic mustard is widespread. It is *highly threatening* to natural plant communities. All newly detected occurrences should be eradicated.

Commercial Availability: None, but may be contained in soil of purchased landscape plants.



Sources: Forestry Images: Forest Health, Natural Resources & Silviculture Images: <http://www.forestryimages.org/>
<http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien>
<http://nbii-nin.ciesin.columbia.edu/ipane>

Rhoads, A.F. and T. Block. 2007. Plants of Pennsylvania. 2nd ed. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, PA. p. 676.



Central Jersey Invasive Species Strike Team (CJISST) is a regional cooperative effort to detect, map, and manage emerging populations of invasive species. This initiative is a partnership of state, county, and municipal agencies, conservation groups, and private citizens. To learn more, please contact us: **Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space**, (609) 730-1560, www.fohvos.org or **Upper Raritan Watershed Association**, (908) 234-1852, www.urwa.org.

