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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **FALL IS A GOOD TIME TO MANAGE GARLIC MUSTARD**

Fall is a good time to control measures on an all too common invasive species called garlic mustard. Garlic mustard is a European woodland plant introduced to North America by early settlers for its culinary and alleged medicinal qualities. In North America, European insects and diseases that control the plant's population are not present.

Garlic mustard starts growing earlier in the season than our native plants, and outcompetes them. It also produces large quantities of seed. For these reasons, garlic mustard spreads rapidly in wooded areas, forming tall, dense stands that smother native wildflowers, and native tree and shrub seedlings. Another challenging aspect of garlic mustard, aside from how it spreads, is its effects on other plants. Studies suggest garlic mustard is allelopathic, which means this plant sends out chemicals that hurt the growth of its neighbors.

The chemicals garlic mustard releases are called glucosinolates. These give it a spicy taste but also harm beneficial soil fungi called mycorrhizae. These fungi help provide important nutrients to plants in exchange for energy. However, like many members of its plant family Brassicaceae, garlic mustard does not have this fungal relationship. Over time, a large garlic mustard patch can severely damage native plant populations that otherwise would thrive in the area. In addition, animals, birds and insects that depended on a diversity of plant species for food and shelter can then no longer live in the infested area.

Garlic mustard is a biennial plant with a two-year life cycle. The first year, it forms a rosette of round, scalloped-margined leaves that stay semi-evergreen through winter. The second year, it sends up a flower stem with triangular toothed leaves that bears tiny white flowers with four petals. The plant dies after producing long narrow seedpods. At maturity, garlic mustard plants may be 3 to 4 ft. tall and bear up to 500 seeds per plant. Its seeds are not commonly spread by wind or animals, but rather through water or mud. These seeds can stay alive in the soil for a long time, causing issues every spring and fall. While it may seem like a hassle, removing soil from your boots before and after you leave a forest is a great way to avoid introducing invasive species, including garlic mustard.

To control garlic mustard, if the area is small, hand removal of the plant and most of its root system could be an option. For larger sites, herbicide applications are generally the favored technique. If you decide to go this route, a labeled herbicide that contains the active ingredient triclopyr (Garlon) or glyphosate (RoundUp) can be effective. Be aware that glyphosate products are non-selective, and will harm most actively growing plants if sprayed. Triclopyr normally

does not hurt grasses and sedges, as it is more targeted toward broadleaves. Mention of a specific pesticide is for educational purposes only. Always follow the pesticide label directions attached to the pesticide container you are using. Remember, the label is the law.

Additional information on garlic mustard and control options can be found on a UW fact sheet at: <https://tinyurl.com/y6xuyduo>, and additional information on how to identify it can be found at: <https://tinyurl.com/y34ojxou>

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