

It's That Time Again!

Has it really been a year since 7000 garlic mustard plants (*Alliaria petiolate*) were uprooted along the roadside at Toeder Park!

Such a lovely bouquet of heart-shaped leaves! Another week or two and they will launch spikes of dainty white flowers. They smell more like garlic than mustard. How can such a lovely little plant be such a menace?

They might be welcome in the kitchen, but left alone, they inject a chemical into their home base so that only garlic mustard can survive there! It produces antifungal compounds which interfere with native trees, e.g., red maples, sugar maples and white ash. Each garlic mustard plant penetrates 4" deep and disrupts saplings (Michael Phillipps, Mycorrhizal Planet, 2017).

The horticultural geek calls this "allelopathic" in which one plant affects the health of another. You might be familiar with plants that help other plants grow – also called allelopathic – but most of us call them companion plants. It can be pulled up rather easily unlike its neighbors who sting or pierce the gardener (more on that later in the season).

Garlic Mustard, however, is not a good neighbor, it does not care, it does not share. Uproot him or his family will move in next Spring! Marti Prorok

<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Invasives/fact/GarlicMustard.html>

