

## WEEDWATCH #7: Garlic Mustard, Giant Hogweed, Goatsrue, Milk Thistle

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Weedwatch is an occasional series of information sheets on invasive weeds in western Washington.

**Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*)** – This invasive, fast spreading perennial is found throughout Puget Sound. This shade loving plant produces many viable seeds and can easily create a monoculture in shady understories. A biennial herb that can grow to 3', it is best controlled mechanically. Flowers and rosettes can be pulled or dug up to reduce spreading. Deep mulch can be used to shade out seedlings. This plant flowers April through May. Garlic mustard can be controlled by applying triclopyr; check with your local weed board before using any chemical to eradicate this plant.



Photo courtesy of King County WA



Photo courtesy of King County WA

**Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegzaianum*)** – Often growing 10–15' tall, this native to Asia has become a serious threat to moist natural areas such as streamsides. This versatile invasive can tolerate shady to sunny conditions and spreads by seed, leaving no undisturbed area alone. Beware when approaching this plant to eradicate it; the watery sap contains photo-dermatitis toxins. If the sap gets on your skin and is then exposed to sunlight, it can cause painful burns and sometimes scarring. This plant can be distinguished from cow parsnip, a native, by the overall size of the plant, the larger purplish bumps, and shorter hairs on the leaf underside. Plants can be controlled mechanically by digging 6" down and removing all young plants and mature plant. Seed heads should be collected and bagged for disposal. Be sure to wear gloves!

**Goatsrue (*Galega officinalis*)** – This species is currently present in isolated populations in King County. This persistent, deeprooted perennial can grow to 2–6' tall, and the pea like flowers vary from light purple to white. Although Goatsrue looks like a vetch, it lacks tendrils and does not clamber over other vegetation. Goatsrue has a long flower period from June through the fall frost. The plant is difficult to eradicate once established, so keep your eyes out and alert the local weed board if you see any lurking around your area. It can be managed mechanically by digging up the deep roots, or in combination with mowing and spraying the re-sprouts.



Photo courtesy of King County WA

**Milk Thistle (*Silybum marianum*)** – Milk thistle's range in Washington is expanding rapidly; this class A weed must be eradicated when found. The distinctive marbling of the leaves makes this plant easy to identify. It can grow from 6–8' and is found in pasture and rangeland as well as on marine shorelines. Toxic to animals, it will often be the only plant left in a pasture. Milk thistle flowers in late April to June with seeds developing into large tufts in June. Plants can be controlled by digging or mowing them before they mature. Contact your local weed board if you find any of this plant.



Photos by King County WA and Sound Native Plants

For more info, check: *Noxious/Invasive Weed Control* on the Links page on our website.