

Our June event is quickly approaching! We'll meet this **Thursday evening June 7th, 7pm at the Service Complex**. Dr. Steve Rissing, Professor, Department of Evolution, Ecology and Organismal Biology is talking about plant salvaging and the importance of saving diversity in our community. Dr. Rissing, a Dublin resident has been instrumental in plant salvaging plan for the City. I look forward to hearing him speak. Please let me know if you can join us!

Dublin is full of diversity and it's fun to learn new plants and their old uses. I thought I'd briefly write on garlic mustard. Although it's a non-native, it's been around for 100's of years. Researchers have looked at why it's a problem now and have found some relation to deer herds. As deer populations increase, garlic mustard populations increase.

It's not that deer eat garlic mustard and spread the seeds; it's that deer eat everything except garlic mustard! There are no native plants left to compete and therefore, garlic mustard spreads rampantly. Garlic mustard has other strong qualities too. Not only does garlic mustard stay green longer into colder months, but it also greens up before many other plants, getting a jump start on growth. It also harms mycorrhizal fungi living in our soils that some North American plants, including native forest trees, require for proper growth.

The plant gets a further foothold by producing up to 8,000 seeds, but also as few as a couple hundred per plant. The seeds can remain dormant for many years in the soil, making it a hard plant to eradicate. Also, it has no natural enemies here. Nothing, other than some humans eat it. It also self pollinates, so one flower can make a difference and spread quickly. Two Boston University biologists spread 20 seeds in a controlled plot and watched it grow to over 6,000 in four years!

Garlic mustard is usually a biennial, but sometimes an annual. Introduced as a culinary herb in the mid to late 1800's, Garlic mustard has many uses and is very high in vitamins A and C. The plant has antiseptic qualities and can be used for skin abrasions. Many believed it strengthened the digestive track and be a diuretic. Most commonly, the young plants are tasty and have been used in salads throughout Europe for centuries. Older leaves are bitter, even when cooked.

Perhaps this is how we can help control the populations in Dublin....eat our way free of garlic mustard. Joking aside, I am proud of and thankful for the hard work the Green Team and many other volunteers have done to help eradicate non-natives. We are on our way to a healthier and more diverse community.

*** I wanted to say **thanks** for spreading the word about bike recycling. After the day was over we had over 40 collected. Teddy and Becky of Third-Hand also send their thanks!

All my best,
Mime