



# Replacing Garlic Mustard on Your Property

Garlic mustard is an invasive species that arrived by way of our herb gardens. Its nutritional value for humans masks more problematic traits, like the ability to crowd-out other species, failing to feed wildlife, and preventing seeds of trees from sprouting. As you're removing it from your woods (thank you!), you may have native species come back up on their own, or they may need some help getting established. Below are a few native options (besides glorious spring ephemerals like *Trillium*, trout lily, and spring beauty) that we recommend as alternatives:

**Groundcovers:** Plants that cover an area densely and low-to-the-ground, giving you a better chance of targeting garlic mustard.



Wild ginger  
K Grzesiak

**Wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*)** does a great job of covering a shady area with its wide, thick leaves. It sticks very close to the ground, making it easy to plant other taller plants into it. Anecdotal evidence suggests it may even out-compete garlic mustard without assistance!

**Canada mayflower (*Maianthemum canadense*)** is more delicate-looking and less dense than wild ginger, but also spreads faster to cover an area. It has showy blooms, sending off little clusters of white, star-like flowers, and is great for spring pollinators.



Canada mayflower  
Lahvak



Wild strawberry  
Leo Papandreou

**Wild strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana*)** is perfect for areas that get a little more sun! With its bright white flowers and tasty red fruits (if you can beat the birds to them!) it does a great job of filling in spots that might be too sunny for other shady groundcovers while supporting all sorts of wildlife.

**Other Groundcover Notes:** Remember that native groundcovers often do best in a mix of species, where each can take over the spot that works best for it.

Since you're taking the time to improve your habitat, please steer clear of invasive groundcovers like myrtle/periwinkle (*Vinca minor*), lily-of-the-valley (*Convallaria majalis*), English ivy (*Hedera helix*), and sweet-woodruff (*Gallium odoratum*).

**Perennials:** Plants that get about as tall as garlic mustard. Good for encouraging diversity after removal.



Foamflower  
Dogtooth77

**Foamflower (*Tiarella cordiformis*)** forms adorable mounds of heart-shaped leaves with spangles of pale blooms on stalks, this pretty plant is great at growing close to other perennials, helping to leave no space for garlic mustard seedlings to start. **Bishop's cap (*Mitella diphylla*)** and **American alumroot (*Heuchera americana*)** are two other native species that can look like foamflower and fill a similar niche.

**Jacob's ladder (*Polemonium reptans*)** sports blue-purple blooms in spring, spreads gently in the right conditions, and has a lovely cascade of leaves. With many other shade flowers being white, it's nice to add some color! Bees and butterflies love it too.



Jacob's ladder  
Dogtooth77



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Bloodroot  
K Grzesiak

**Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*)** does indeed have bloody roots, but more fascinating are its early spring flowers for pollinators and its intriguing lobed leaves that last through the summer. It's not dense enough to block garlic mustard, but it does a great job getting an early start.

**Sedges and Ferns:** Change it up; you're not limited to showy, flowering plants! Sedges (a grass-like plant) and ferns are great habitat in shaded areas.



Pennsylvania sedge  
William Cullina

**Pennsylvania sedge (*Carex pennsylvanica*)** grows densely and never gets very tall. Despite not being very showy, this plant supports many insects, including the caterpillars of the Appalachian brown butterfly.

**Silver sedge (*Carex platyphylla*)** grows in neat clumps with wide, pale leaves, and supports a multitude of insects that feed our woodland birds.



Silver sedge  
Jason Sturner



Male fern  
Valerie75

**Male fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*)** is a native fern that does a great job of filling in shady areas, providing great cover for wildlife.

**Christmas fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*)** sports green foliage all year 'round, making it ideal for keeping garlic mustard seedlings under wraps.



Christmas fern  
Tom Potterfield