



# Rare Plants of New Hampshire

## Wild Garlic

*Allium canadense* L.

Lily family (Liliaceae)

### What Does It Look Like?

This woodland plant is a perennial herb, which is 20-60 cm (8-24 inches) tall. It grows from an undivided, egg-shaped bulb that has a fibrous coat and a strong onion scent.

- Leaves:** The grass-like leaves are very narrow 2-4 mm (0.1 inch) and flat, not hollow, 15-45 cm (6-18) inches long.
- Flower:** The flower cluster is on a long, erect stem that is leafy in the lower third. It contains many small bulbs and few flowers bunched at the top of the stem with 2 or 3 bracts directly beneath the cluster. The flowers are whitish or pink and 6-parted, on stalks up to 2.5 cm (1 inch) long. It flowers from June to mid July.
- Fruit:** The most conspicuous part of the flower cluster are the bulblets, which often sprout late in the season. Withered flowers contain small, shining seeds.

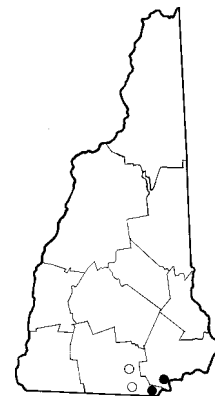
- Similar species:** This species can be distinguished from other wild onions by its combination of flat leaves that are not hollow, even towards the base, and bulblets that replace most of its flowers. Field garlic (*Allium vineale*), a weed from Europe, has bulblets like wild garlic but its leaves are hollow towards the base and it is more often found in meadows.



### Where Is It Found?

- Habitat:** Across its range, wild garlic grows in open woods including sandy loams of shrubby floodplains. In New Hampshire, likely natural communities include riverside outcrops and various floodplain forests (including silver maple, red maple, and river birch floodplains).

- Associated species:** Red maple (*Acer rubrum*), silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*), basswood (*Tilia americana*), poison ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*), Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*), sensitive fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*), jewelweed (*Impatiens capensis*), Jack-in-the-pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*), wood reed (*Cinna arundinacea*), little bluestem (*Schizacharium scoparium*), carrion flower (*Smilax herbacea*).



### Wild Garlic in New Hampshire

- Historic Location
- Verified since 1980



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**Distribution:** New Brunswick west to North Dakota, and south to Florida and Texas.

### What Is Its Status?

**Conservation**

**status:** Populations of wild garlic are more secure in the central part of its range, but it is critically imperiled at the northern edge of its range here in New Hampshire. It is state listed as endangered due to extreme rarity (only 2 of 4 known occurrences for the state have been confirmed since 1980).

**Management:** The response of wild garlic to significant canopy removal is unknown. Canopy removals generally increase light, temperature, and nutrient availability, and decrease moisture levels. These conditions might favor wild garlic, but also favor other species that may eventually out-compete it. If harvesting is necessary, single tree selection is likely to have less impact than clear cutting.

### What Should You Do If You Find This Plant?

Please report sightings of this or other rare species to the New Hampshire Natural Heritage Inventory. Documentation should include: (1) location of the sighting on USGS topographic map or road map, with written directions for relocating the plant; (2) a photo of the plant; and (3) descriptive information including how many plants there are, whether any plants are flowering or fruiting, and comments about the surrounding vegetation. Information may be sent to NHHI/DRED, PO Box 1856, Concord, NH 03302-1856. If you have any questions, please call the New Hampshire Natural Heritage Inventory Program at (603) 271-3623.

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