INVASIVENESS **UNCLEAR**

WALL LETTUCE

Mycelis muralis

Status in Maine: localized

Description: Erect herbaceous annual, occasionally biennial, 2-3' tall. **Leaves:** Basal and lower stem leaves 2-7" long with deeply cut lobes, and a base that clasps the stem. Middle and upper stem leaves decrease in size and have fewer lobes. **Flowers/seeds:** Flower heads ½" wide, with 5 yellow ray florets (appearing like petals), arranged in a loose panicle with stalks roughly perpendicular from the stem. Plants flower in late summer in Maine. Seed is a small, black-beaked achene tipped with a white collar of bristles. **Stems:** Hairless, sometimes purple tinged; sap milky.

Native range: Europe. **How arrived in U.S.:** Uncertain; possibly brought by settlers as a medicinal herb or potherb.

Reproduction: By seed. Self-fertile. Each plant may produce 500 (in shade) to over 11,000 seeds (full sun). Seed bank longevity is thought to be limited. Seeds are wind dispersed, like dandelions.

Habitat: Forests, woods and woodland clearings, rock outcrops and walls, stream valleys, and springs. Tolerates shade. Amenable to a wide range of soil conditions.

Similar native species: Other “lettuce” species (*Lactuca* spp.). Panicled hawkweed (*Hieracium paniculatum*) has unlobed leaves and more yellow florets per flowerhead. Rattlesnake-roots (*Nabalus* spp.) have white flowers.

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Similar non-native species: Prickly lettuce (*Lactuca serriola*), cultivated lettuce (*Lactuca sativa*), smooth hawkweed (*Crepis capillaris*), wall hawkweed (*Hieracium murorum*), and common nipplewort (*Lapsana communis*).

Control methods: Like garlic mustard, this annual is easy to pull by hand. Wear gloves as the milky sap may irritate the skin. Bag plants for disposal if seed heads are developing; otherwise pile or compost them. Larger populations can be mowed in late spring; repeat for 3 years to deplete seed bank. Plants can also be grazed. A foliar glyphosate herbicide application is effective for severe infestations but must be applied before seed is set (ideally before flowering).