

# Non-Native Garlics

## Species Description

**Scientific names:** *Allium* species

**AKA:** Gerllyg (Welsh)

**Native to:** Mediterranean, Caucasus and Iran

**Habitat:** Roadsides, hedge banks, riverbanks, field margins, rough and waste ground and in woodland

Garlics are perennial herbs with bulbs and grass-like leaves, usually smelling of garlic when fresh and crushed. The most widespread invasive garlics in the UK are Three-cornered Garlic *Allium triquetrum* and Few-flowered Garlic *Allium paradoxum*. Other invasive species include Rosy Garlic *Allium roseum* and Keeled Garlic *Allium carinatum*.

The seeds of Three-cornered Garlic are spread naturally by ants. It was established initially in Guernsey in 1849 and is now naturalised and increasingly abundant and widespread in milder areas of the UK, especially in the south and west, with scattered, sometimes short-lived, populations elsewhere.

Few-flowered Garlic spreads by means of bulbils (small bulbs produced above ground). It was first recorded in the wild near Edinburgh in 1863 and can be very invasive in disturbed habitats. It is increasingly abundant throughout its range, especially in southern Scotland and is most common in the east of Britain.

Rosy Garlic was first recorded in the wild in 1837 and is spreading, especially in south-west England. Keeled Garlic has been naturalised since at least 1806, but there is little evidence of a significant increase in range over the last 50 years.

Three-cornered Garlic is listed under Schedule 9 to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 with respect to England, Wales and Scotland. As such it is an offence to plant or otherwise cause this species to grow in the wild.

For details of legislation go to [www.nonnativespecies.org/legislation](http://www.nonnativespecies.org/legislation).



## Key ID Features

### Few-flowered Garlic



Bulbils (small yellow bulbs produced above ground)



White flowers with faint green stripe and bulbils (small bulbs produced above ground)

Narrow green leaves, only one per bulb, and three-angled stems

### Three-cornered and few-flowered garlic

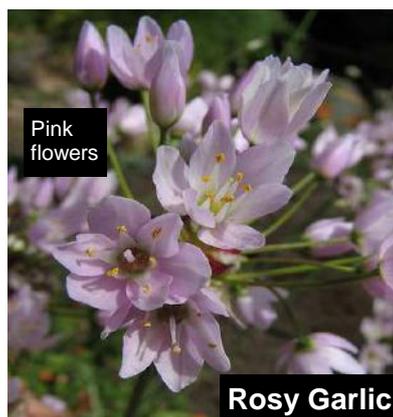


Stem cross section is strongly angled

### Rosy garlic



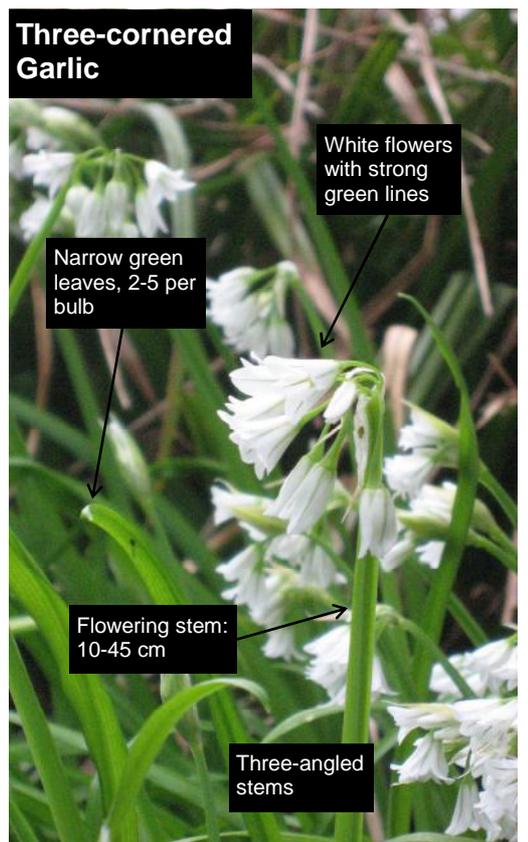
Stem cross section is round



Pink flowers

Rosy Garlic

### Three-cornered Garlic



White flowers with strong green lines

Narrow green leaves, 2-5 per bulb

Flowering stem: 10-45 cm

Three-angled stems

# Identification throughout the year

Three-cornered garlic flowers April to June.

Few-flowered garlic flowers April to May.

Rosy garlic flowers May to June.

Keeled garlic flowers in August.

Leaves are not present over winter as these species die back in cold winters and come up from bulbs in the spring.

# Similar Species

There are a number of native onion and garlic species in the UK with ramsons and wild onion being the most common. There are many species with leaves which are similar to the non-native garlics but the onion/garlic smell is distinctive.

**Ramsons**  
Native  
(*Allium ursinum*)

Smells of onions.  
Few-flowered, three-cornered, rosy and keeled Garlic smell of garlic.

Flowers white, no bulbils

**Wild Onion**  
Native  
(*Allium vineale*)

Smells of onions

Plants up to 75 cm tall

Round stem

Flowers pink to dark red or greenish-white. Can have bulbils

Round stem

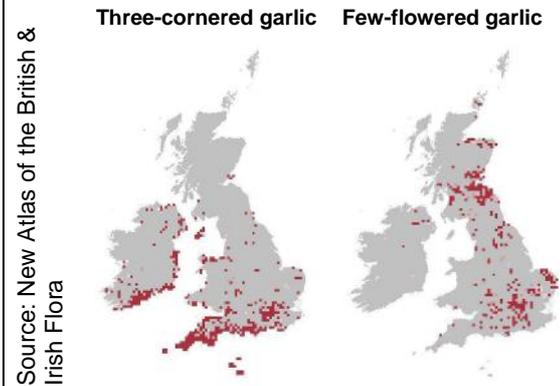
# Distribution

Three-cornered garlic is widespread in milder areas, especially the south-west, and has increased in numbers and range.

Few-flowered garlic has a mainly eastern distribution and is increasing throughout its range.

Rosy garlic is scattered in the south and west and is spreading.

Keeled garlic is scattered throughout the lowlands but does not seem to be increasing.



References and further reading:  
Preston *et al.* (2002) "New Atlas of the British & Irish Flora". Oxford University Press  
Sell, P & Murrell, G (1996) "Flora of Great Britain and Ireland. Volume 5: *Butomaceae-Orchidaceae*". Cambridge University Press  
Stace, C (1997) "New Flora of the British Isles". Cambridge University Press