

PLANTING GARLIC, GROWING GARLIC AND HARVESTING GARLIC

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Garlic is exceptionally Winter-hardy. Fall is the time to plant it for the best yields and the highest quality garlic bulbs. Plant garlic September through mid-October and expect to harvest garlic around July.

Preparing Soil for Growing Garlic

Garlic prefers sandy loam soil, but grows well in nearly any well-drained, slightly acidic (6-7 pH), fertile soil. The looser the composition of the soil, the larger your garlic will grow. Prepare your garlic bed by turning under or tilling in compost (be sure to use compost that is fully aerobically broken down). Make sure your soil has ample phosphorus also.

Take care not to plant garlic in the same place you've previously grown garlic or onions, because of the potential for spreading diseases like white rot. Gophers love garlic; protect your beds with gopher wire or traps.

Planting Garlic & Growing Garlic

You will be planting the garlic cloves (the sections of the bulb). Since there is a correlation between clove size & the harvested garlic bulb size, only plant large cloves. Use the small cloves for eating or preserving. First "crack" the garlic bulb (separate the cloves for planting). Once you have cracked the bulbs, plant within 5-7 days so that the cloves do not dry out. Plant your garlic cloves root end (blunt end) down, in rows spaced 18" apart. Within the row, garlic cloves should be 4" to 6" apart. The cloves should have about 2" of soil over them.

It is a good idea to mulch the garlic after you have planted it. Leaves, compost or broken-down manure make good mulches. In cold northern areas, up to 8" of mulch is required. Water the garlic well and only water again when the soil is dry. Remember, garlic loves water and food, but it must have good drainage or it will rot.

In the Spring, feed the garlic with either composted manure or a well-balanced fertilizer before the bulbs begin to enlarge. Keep the weeds away from your garlic at all times; you either grow weeds or garlic, but not both! Moisture is also a critical factor in the Spring; watch your soil moisture levels and irrigate accordingly. Garlic may send up a scape, or flower stalk, in the Spring. In this case, snip off when it begins to curl. If you let the garlic go to seed, you will end up harvesting smaller bulbs. The scapes can be eaten. They have a mild garlic flavor and taste great sautéed or grilled.

Harvesting Garlic & Storing

Harvest when the foliage falls on softnecks, or when the bottom leaves dry out on hardnecks. When the garlic leaves turn, around July, stop irrigating for 2 weeks and then pull up the plant and immediately put it in a shady place to cure. Regardless of what you read elsewhere, do not leave your garlic in the sun, because it will sunburn and rot. A good way to cure garlic is to tie it in bunches or braid it (if it is a softneck garlic) and hang it in a dark place where it will receive good air circulation. Standard (softneck) garlic takes less time to cure and becomes stronger tasting with age. Hardneck varieties typically will only store for 6 months or less. You can store your garlic in mesh bags (like onion sacks) in a cool dry area. The optimum storage temperature is 50°F, and the relative humidity should be below 60%. If some of your bulbs turn out onion-like, i.e. do not divide into cloves, you can eat them or use them as seed for next year.



hardneck garlic

What is difference between **hardneck** and **softneck** garlic?

Hardneck Garlic tends to have dramatic and distinct flavors, is easy to peel, and has generally bigger cloves. You could call it 'gourmet garlic'. Some varieties include: Music, Chesnok/Russian Red, German White, and German Extra Hardy



softneck garlic

Softneck Garlic is familiar to most as the type of garlic you are most likely to find in a supermarket. They have braidable necks, stores/keeps longer than hardnecks, and tends to have a more subtle flavor than hardneck garlics. Some varieties include: California Early White, California Late White, and New York White