

Garlic Growing Guide



Soil Prep

Garlic prefers a sandy loam soil, but will grow well in most any well-drained, fertile soil. The looser the composition of the soil, the larger bulbs will grow. Prepare your garlic bed by tilling in rich compost (animal manure or plant residue). Rotate your garlic beds to avoid planting where you had previous crops of garlic or onions over the last 3 years—this prevents spread of diseases.

Planting

You will receive whole bulbs of garlic with your order, but you will only plant the cloves. Typically, you want to crack (split apart the bulbs into cloves) about 1-2 days before you're ready to plant. Any earlier & the cloves tend to dry out. Some folks will give the cloves a pre-planting dip—in anything from a liquid kelp to vodka. We will do a vodka dip, and that is to kill any diseases. (there's no need to remove the clove skin)

- Plant garlic clove blunt end down
- Plant in rows spaced 18" apart, and 4-6" apart down the rows
- Cover with 2-4" of soil
- In northern areas mulch with straw or hay, about 6" deep
- In NE Wisconsin, we usually plant the last weekend of October/early November. Just late enough to get some root growth before it freezes.

Growing

Garlic is one of the first to poke through in Spring. Depending on your mulch used, we tend to leave ours in place & the garlic can grow through it. This will keep weeds down and moisture in. Garlic doesn't compete well with weeds—they will really diminish your bulb size. Proper irrigation is critical, garlic loves water, but doesn't like standing in it.

The Hardneck varieties that we sell will send up a shoot in June usually—this is a scape, cut it off once it starts to curl. These can be eaten & are delicious grilled or sautéed.

Harvesting, Curing & Storing

When the garlic leaves begin to turn yellow in summer, stop watering them for about 2 weeks & then you can begin to harvest. We don't recommend "pulling" them up, but digging under them slightly with a garden fork & loosening the soil underneath. Similar to digging carrots. Once you harvested your garlic, they will need to cure for a couple of weeks. To cure your garlic, tie it in bunches with twine & hang in a dark area with good ventilation. We also use fans to keep the air circulating. After about 3 weeks, we'll cut down the garlic, trim the roots off & store in mesh bags.

Hard neck varieties will typically store for about 6 months at 50°F and humidity should be below 60%.

How much Seed Garlic to buy?

One pound of seed garlic (2"+ Bulbs) is usually about 6-7 bulbs, with 7 to 8 cloves per bulb. For most garlic's you can expect about 8 pounds of yield for every pound in plant in ideal growing conditions.

