



GARLIC

Allium sativum

There are two basic classes of garlic: hardneck and softneck. Softneck varieties store very well, are braidable and easy to grow. The hardnecks have larger, richer flavored cloves and are easier to peel.

SITE REQUIREMENTS

Garlic require at least 6 hours of direct sun, and rich, well drained, light soil rich in organic matter.

PLANTING

Garlic is best planted Sept.-Nov, but there is also a planting window from February to March which yields smaller heads. Separate the cloves just prior to planting, but don't peel them as the skins will help prevent rot. Plant cloves 1-2" deep, root side down, pointed tip up. Space plants 6-8" apart with rows 6-8" apart. Keep well weeded.

WATER REQUIREMENTS

How much water your plants will require depends on soil and weather. Garlic wants average, evenly moist soil while it is growing new leaves. Water deeply when the top 2" of soil is dry. As the leaves turn brown allow the soil to dry out.

FERTILIZING

Side dress in March with cotton seed meal or blood meal. Another option is a foliar-spray fertilizer, such as Alaska Fish Fertilizer, every 10-14 days, starting in March. When summer arrives, garlic stops making new leaves and starts forming bulbs. Once bulbing begins (~6/15), stop fertilizing and decrease watering. As the bulbs mature, the leaves turn brown from the bottom of the plant up. Stop watering when 7-8 green leaves remain. In years with a wet June, it may be that a fall planted garlic crop never needs water. Hardneck varieties put up a tall, woody, flowering stalk that usually grows bulblets at the top. **CUT FLOWER STALKS OFF** as soon as the stem has reached 8-9" tall or made one full curl, this will redirect energy to the bulb.

HARVESTING & STORAGE

When there are 4-6 green leaves remaining, dig up one plant, or dig a small hole to check soil moisture. If dry 4-6" deep, let plants continue browning until only 2 green leaves remain. If wet in the top 4-6", dig plants now and begin curing.

CURING

With the leaves and stem still attached, hang plants in a place with excellent airflow but no direct sun, perhaps under an eave or on a covered porch. Slatted shelves or screens can also work. Cure for 6-8 weeks then trim the roots and stem and move to storage.

STORAGE

Hang garlic in netted sacks, or make and hang braids of the softneck types so there is air circulation on all sides. Perfect storage conditions are 45-55°F at 50% relative humidity. Keeping garlic below 40°F actually makes it sprout.

HARD NECK

CREOLE GROUP: Cultivated in Spain by the Conquistadors. This group of garlic is superb for fresh eating with an initial sweet flavor that builds in heat. They have 8-12 cloves per head. White wrappers reveal a red to purple clove. Tolerant of adverse weather conditions especially in hot climates. Weak flower stalks. Extremely attractive heads.

PORCELAIN GROUP: Produces the largest cloves with the fewest per bulb, 2-5 cloves per bulb. Buff-colored with purple-rose striping, easy to peel and use. Excellent storage for a hardneck variety. Considered the most flavorful garlic without heat.

PURPLE-STRIPE GROUP: Nicely shaped bulbs with 8-12 tall, pointy cloves around a single stem. Cloves generally are the same size within a single bulb. Red-purple to brownish clove coverings. Plants can be very tall. Medium storage at 4-6 months.

ROCAMBOLE GROUP: Round, nicely shaped bulbs with purple splashed coverings. 6-10 cloves per bulb around a central woody stem. Easy to peel. Robust, rich, earthy-tasting garlic. Best flavor, but shortest storage time of all the garlic groups.

TURBAN GROUP: Often this group is considered a subgroup of Asiatic garlic. Slow to bolt and an earlier harvest than other varieties. Instantly hot flavor. Turban garlic is unique in that it can be a softneck in mild winter climates.

SOFT NECK

ARTICHOKE GROUP: The most common of all the garlic types. Easy to grow, productive, large bulbs with good storage characteristics. The least complex flavor of any garlic, but very strong heat. Adaptable to any climate.

SILVERSKIN GROUP: Slightly harder to grow than other soft necks, but highly productive. Taller cloves with more pinkish-rose coloring. Number one for braiding because of their long storage capabilities and bright, white skins. Usually the last garlic to harvest. Generally hot and strong flavor.