

# HOW TO PLANT, STORE, AND CURE GARLIC:

## 1. Soil

The best garlic grows in soil that has a neutral pH, well drained and high in organic material. Loosen the soil well just before you plant.

## 2. Planting

Separate bulbs into cloves the day you plant.

The best time to plant is 4-6 weeks before hard frost (28 degrees Fahrenheit) approx middle of Oct. Plant the cloves pointed end up so that the tip is approximately 2-3 inches below the surface of the soil. Plant spacing

should be approx. 5-8 inches between plants. After planting, smooth the soil and add between 2-4 inches of high quality mulch (preferably dried grass or clean straw). Maintain moist soil but not too wet.



## 3. Growth Habits

Through fall and winter garlic will develop a root structure and begin its leaf growth.

In the early spring garlic will send up the above ground leaf structure and then during early summer as it heats up outside, the plant will begin to bulb. If you leave the mulch in place the garlic will generally grow through the mulch and the mulch will help keep the weeds down. Garlic does not like to compete against weeds.

If it is a hardneck variety expect a scape to begin to appear after all the leaves are out in June. Depending on variety, the scape will bend, twist or coil and then midsummer will straighten out. For maximum bulb size, remove the scapes by snapping them off with your fingers just above the top leaf approximately 7-10 days after it reaches its maximum curl.

## 4. When to Harvest

Plan ahead. Make sure you have a place out of the sun to cure the garlic after it has been harvested. As the garlic approaches maturity, the bottom leaves will begin to dry out first. The garlic will be ready to harvest when you have approx. 3-5 leaves at the top of the plant that are still mostly green. Being careful not to hit the bulbs, use a spade or garden fork and gently lift the plant from below. Use caution. The bulb might be deeper than you expect. Gently brush off any excess soil, leave the plant fully intact and move into a cool, shaded area quickly after lifting from the ground. Be very cautious. The bulbs sunburn and bruise very easily at this point. Bulbs will not cure or store well if damaged or bruised.

## 5. Curing

Garlic needs approx. 3-5 weeks being hung in a well ventilated, shaded environment to slowly begin to dry or "cure." Bundle your plants and hang them with roots still intact. Don't bother to clean the remaining dirt off of the plant until the bulbs are well cured. You can tell when they're done curing when you cut the stem about an inch above the bulb and there is no moisture left in the stem. At that point you can trim the roots to about a quarter inch and carefully clean the bulbs leaving as many intact bulb wrappers as possible. After that, they are ready for storage.

## 6. Storage

Best storage for garlic is approximately room temperature with humidity about 60% with plenty of open air. Caution: do not seal them in a plastic bag. They will rot. Do not store them in the refrigerator either. They will sprout.