



GARLIC

Garlic is a member of the allium family. It is easy to grow and requires very little space in the garden. Garlic grows from individual cloves broken off from a whole bulb. Each clove will multiply in the ground, forming a new bulb that consists of anywhere from 5-10 cloves. Garlic tastes great roasted or used as a flavoring in many recipes. **Weeding is important as garlic does not like competition.**

Where to Plant

Garlic should be planted in a spot not recently used for garlic or other plants from the onion family. Do not plant garlic in areas where water can collect around the roots, causing them to rot or become diseased.

Soil Preparation

Garlic should be planted in a fertile, well-drained soil. A raised bed works very well. Remove stones from the top 6 inches of soil. Work several inches of compost or well-rotted manure into the bed, along with 20-20-20 fertilizer.

How to Plant Garlic

Break bulbs into individual cloves for planting. Garlic likes a rich loamy soil. Plant cloves as soon as possible in spring, so as to give them the optimum growing season. Space cloves 10 cm (4 in) apart, push cloves down into ground leaving the tip slightly exposed. Rows should be at least 30 cm (12 in) apart.

Spring Planting

Plant cloves as early in spring as soil can be worked, about the same time as onion sets. Spring planted garlic should be put in the ground in the same manner as in the fall.

Fall Planting

Plant cloves in mid-autumn in a sunny location with rich, well-drained soil. Set cloves root side down 4-6" apart in rows 1-1/2 to 2' apart, and cover with 1-2" of fine soil. In the North, put down 6" of mulch for winter protection. Garlic may begin growth late in fall or early in spring.

Spring Care

When the leaves begin to grow, it is important to feed the garlic plants to encourage good growth. A teaspoon or two of a high-nitrogen fertilizer that decomposes slowly, such as blood meal should be gently worked into the soil near each plant. If the mulch has decomposed, add a layer to help retain moisture and keep weeds under control. In late spring some garlic varieties produce flower stalks that have small bulbils. Cut these stalks off. This will insure that all of the food the plant produces will go into the garlic bulb itself and not the clusters of bulbils. In the month of June the garlic plants stop producing new leaves and begin to form bulbs. At this time you will remove any remaining mulch and stop watering. The garlic will store better if you allow the soil around the bulbs to dry out.

Harvesting Garlic

You will know when to harvest garlic when most of the leaves have turned brown. This usually occurs in end of July to late August, depending on your climate. At this time you may dig the bulbs up, being careful not to bruise them. If the bulbs are left in the ground too long, they may separate and will not store well. Lay the garlic plants out to dry for 2 or 3 weeks in a shady area with good air circulation. Be sure to bring the garlic plants in if rain is forecasted for your area. When the roots feel brittle and dry, rub them off, along with any loose dirt. Do not get the bulbs wet or break them apart, or the plants won't last as long.