

Garlic Planting and Growing Guide

By GetGarlic.com

You need not be an expert gardener to grow garlic. It is quite easy to grow good quality garlic if you plant good organic garlic seeds and follow certain easy steps.

Although garlic can grow in almost all types of soil, to grow perfectly sized garlic bulbs the soil must be fertile with sufficient soil organic matter. A good drainage system is very important also, garlic will not do well in wet soil. It is also recommended to send the soil for a test at your local agricultural extension service in case you are unaware of the soil quality. To grow the best quality garlic, the soil pH level (acidity or alkalinity measure) should be 6 to 7.



Garlic Preparation

Step 1— The garlic heads must be broken apart by hand to separate all the cloves. Any use of tool must be avoided for this activity as you might damage the garlic. If everything goes well, in the following maturing season, every planted garlic clove will produce a garlic head. Bigger size garlic heads will grow from bigger cloves, and smaller garlic heads will grow from smaller cloves. The smaller cloves are kept aside by certain gardeners for consumption, making pickles or planting compactly to grow green garlic for consumption in the spring. This step should be done no more than a day or so before planting.

Step 2— (Optional) We take a bucket and fill it with water and fish emulsion (organic certified) and soak the cloves for 10-12 hours. The fish emulsion is an excellent fertilizer that jump starts the growing process.

Step 3— (Optional) Drain the fish emulsion and put the cloves in vodka for 10 minutes. This will kill any bacteria or mold on the clove. This will insure a healthy seed.

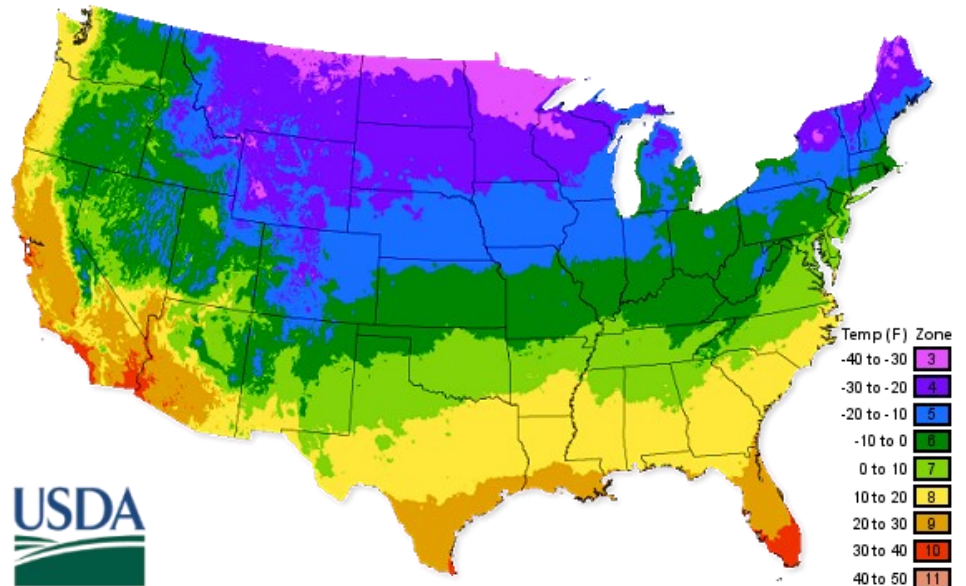
Planting Garlic

When to Plant - Planting garlic is typically done in the fall after the first good frost in temperate areas. In the South you can plant into early winter.



We are in zone 5 so we typically will plant around the middle of October, 4-6 weeks before we normally see the ground frozen.

The cloves must be planted 3 to 4 inches deep, with the pointed side facing upward and the growth plate downward (where the root grows), then conceal it with soil and tap down. You must leave a space of around 6 inches between the cloves. They need to have a little space between them.



Mulching

In colder climates mulching is critical to keep the garlic from freezing. After the planting process is completed, you must cover the cultivated area with about 6 inches of mulch. You can use any readily available materials like straw or leaves as the mulch. It is not recommended to use grass or hay as it will fill the bed with a lot of weed seeds. Mulch can be left as it is to preserve the moisture of the soil and to facilitate the weed control, or it can be taken off in the spring after the risk of a harsh winter.

Spring and Early Summer Care

Watering your garlic may be essential if you are living in dry climatic region. Garlic plants require uniformly damp soil, particularly when it is producing leaves. Soils that are sandy may have to be watered regularly. Weeds have to be kept to the minimum for the healthy growth of your garlic plants as garlic does not like competition and weed pressure will limit the size of bulbs you will grow.

Garlic Scapes

A flower or bulbil called scape is produced by Hardneck garlic varieties during spring. When these scapes start to coil up, it must be cut off to facilitate healthy growth of the garlic bulb.



Harvesting

Garlic is typically harvested in July, but that can certainly change depending on where you are at in the country and spring conditions. If you harvest it too early, it will result in smaller heads and late harvest will result in excessively matured garlic that will have lesser shelf life. The key indicator to know when the garlic is ready to harvest is the color of the leaves, which will turn yellow and tanned when ready.

When the garlics are ready to be pulled out, the leaves begin to dry out from bottom up, with almost half the leaves remaining green and half fully dried out. You can also determine if the garlic is ready by pulling few garlic heads. If the head has grown substantially and the bulb wrappers look tight with the cloves well-developed, they are ready to be harvested.

With a shovel, carefully dig out the head along with the plant. Harvesting must be carried out with great care without damaging the bulb. After cleaning the leftover soil, bundle them in groups of 5 or 10 plants, and leave it for curing by hanging them in a dry, warm and well-ventilated place for around three to four weeks.

After the garlic is cured cut the tops and roots and store in a dry area with 50-55 degree temperature for the winter.

That's it.... Simple. Happy Growing!

Thank You!

