

GROWING GARLIC



Garlic comes in 2 main types, softneck and hardneck. Softneck can be braided and will last longer in storage. Hardneck won't last as long, but will produce larger heads, peel easier and is thought to be more flavorful.

WHEN TO GROW:

Garlic is best planted in the Fall and then allowed to rest throughout the winter and into spring. In MA, plant 4–6 weeks before the ground freezes. This gives the cloves time to root but not leaf.

SOIL & SUNLIGHT:

Garlic likes fertile soil with lots of organic matter, good drainage, and PH of 6.5–7. Be sure to add lots of compost to the soil at planting. They also require 6–8 hours of direct sunlight so choose a location in full sun.

HOW TO PLANT:

Break the bulb into individual cloves. Choose the largest cloves to plant for best success. Plant individual cloves in a row, 1 inch below the surface, pointed side up, 6”–8” between rows or stagger the cloves if densely planted. Once the ground freezes, cover the beds with straw mulch, 3”–4” thick. This will reduce soil temperature fluctuation and prevent frost heaving of planted cloves.

GROWING:

Keep your garlic beds well weeded. In spring, moderately fertilize with Nitrogen rich fertilizer or side dress with chicken manure. Keep soil evenly moist (not wet) through the leaf growing period. Keep the straw mulch around the growing leaves to control moisture and temperature and to suppress weeds. Once summer arrives the bulb formation starts and fertilizer is no longer needed and could even be harmful to developing heads. In June, young scapes should be trimmed off to encourage bulb growth.

FUN FACT: Garlic is a natural mosquito repellent. What a great reason to eat more!



Your garlic cloves need to be exposed to temperatures below 65° F or they won't form bulbs. Don't let hardneck put energy into flower stalks, or you'll end up with a small bulb. To maximize your yield, cut the seed stalks off when they reach 8"-9" tall. These "scapes" can be used to add a nice garlicky flavor to recipes..

HARVEST:

When one third of the leaves are yellowed, brown or dried, it is time to lift the bulbs by gently loosening the soil with a spading fork. Brush off loose soil from the cloves, but do not rinse them with water.

CURING:

Drying is an essential part of curing the garlic. Gather loose bundles of 6-8 stalks and hang them under cover in a dry location with good air circulation. Softneck varieties can be braided by their stalks for a decorative look. Keep the stalks and leaves attached to the bulbs during curing for more longevity. Curing is complete when the outer skins are dry and crispy, the neck is constricted, and the center of the cut stem is hard, about 2-4 weeks.

STORAGE:

Once cured, trim off roots, gently clean the heads, and if storing in mesh sacks, the stalks can be cut back to 1/2 inch above the bulb. Store garlic heads at 45-55° with 50% humidity in mesh sacks or hung in bunches. Good air circulation is important for storage. A whole, unpeeled garlic head will last about six months. An unpeeled clove that has been separated from the head, will stay good for about three weeks.

If you have any questions about growing your garlic contact our veggie team at 508-358-2283 X 340

