

Home Gardening Series

# Garlic

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Vegetables

## Environment

**Light** – sunny  
**Soil** – well-drained loam  
**Fertility** – medium-rich  
**pH** – 5.5 to 7.0  
**Temperature** – cool  
**Moisture** – moist

## Culture

**Planting** – cloves in fall  
**Spacing** – 1-6 x 12-24 inches  
**Hardiness** – hardy biennial  
**Fertilizer** – heavy feeder in spring

## Garlic – *Allium sativum*

The exact origin of cultivated garlic, as we know it, is not known. However, we can find written references to it from the writings of the Greeks, Egyptians, Romans and Chinese. The name *garlic* comes to us from the Welsh word “garlleg,” which is transformed into the English word “garlic.”



Wherever it came from, there can be no doubt that garlic has captured the interest of gardeners and cooks alike. It is easily cultivated and persists in the garden for years.

Garlic, a member of the onion family, may be grown successfully in most Arkansas home gardens. Garlic is started by planting small cloves, divisions of the large bulb. Each bulb contains a dozen or more cloves; each clove is planted separately. The larger the clove, the larger the size of the mature bulb at harvest. Do not divide the bulb until you are ready to plant;

early separation results in decreased yields. Select large, smooth, fresh “seed bulbs” that are free of disease.

## Cultural Practices

Garlic grows best on friable loam soils that are fertile and high in organic matter. Gardeners who grow good onion crops can grow garlic. Garlic does well at high fertilizer levels. Apply 1 pound of 10-20-10 fertilizer per 100 square feet three times during the growing season – once in the fall when planting and twice more in the spring as the plants grow. Bulbs will be small if the soil is excessively dry and irregular in shape if the soil becomes compacted.

## Planting Time

Plant cloves in the fall to allow enough time for the plants to mature by the next summer. The latest garlic can be planted in Arkansas is mid-January to permit formation of daughter cloves to produce a new bulb. Cloves planted later will produce a “round,” one large clove but no daughter cloves.

## Spacing and Depth of Planting

Fall preparation of the soil and planting is desirable. Plant the cloves 3 to 5 inches apart in an upright position (to ensure a straight neck) and cover to a depth of 1 inch. Allow 18 to 30 inches between rows. Garlic plants are quite hardy and will grow throughout the winter. If temperatures go below 0 degrees F, you may wish to protect the plants by placing leaves or straw over them until it warms up.

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## Cultivars -

Crop	Cultivar	Days to Maturity	Cloves Per 100 Feet of Row	Remarks
Softneck Garlic	Italian Late	8 months	2 pounds	Softneck garlic with tight, light-colored wrappers, pleasing garlic aroma, productive and easy to grow.
	Silver Rose	8 months	2 pounds	Rose-colored cloves in white wrappers, fast-growing, stores eight months. Beautiful braided.
	Mild French Silverskin	8 months	2 pounds	Best in southern climates, especially hot and dry, 14 cloves per bulb. Excellent keeper.
	Inchelium Red	8 months	2 pounds	15 cloves per bulb with a wide variation in clove count. Outperforms Italian Purple.
	California Early	8 months	2 pounds	Artichoke type, large cloves, stores well.
	California Late	8 months	2 pounds	Artichoke type, large cloves, stores well.
	Early Red Italian	8 months	2 pounds	Artichoke type, matures early, stores well.
Hardneck Garlic	Korean Red	8 months	2 pounds	Purple-striped bulbs contain 4 to 8 very large, easy-to-peel purple cloves. Flavor is very hot! Matures early, adapts to most climates. Keeps well.
	Spanish Roja	8 months	2 pounds	Robust flavor, 10 cloves per bulb, easy to peel, stores three months. Grows well in cold winter climates.
	Ajo Rojo	8 months	2 pounds	Creole type that tolerates heat.
	German Extra Hardy	8 months	2 pounds	Porcelain type, cold hardy.
	Purple Italian	8 months	2 pounds	Rocambole type, large bulbs.

the bulbs to dry.

## Harvesting and Storage

During the winter when the garlic plants have six or more leaves, you can take the oldest leaves from a few plants and use them like scallions. In the spring as the plants begin their rapid growth phase, you can harvest a few and use them as “green garlic.” You can continue to do this until the bulbs mature. They do not store well but are very usable. As the flower stalk, or scape, emerges on hardneck cultivars, break it off and use as scallions in stir fry or as a pesto.

Bulbs may be harvested when the tops start to dry, usually in July. Place the bulbs on trays with screens or slatted bottoms and remove the tops when dry. Mature bulbs are best stored under cool, dry conditions. Store the bulbs as you would dry onions – 72 degrees F or above, dry conditions and with good air circulation. If you grow only a few plants, braid the tops together with twine and hang

## Garlic Glossary

**Bulb** – Collection of cloves joined at the basal plate.

**Clove** – The individual unit that is planted or used.

**Leaves** – Leaves that arise from the growing point in the clove.

**Scape** – Flower stalk that is sent up from the bulb.

**Bulbils** – Small bulbs produced on the scape that can be planted.

**Basal plate** – Structure that joins cloves together.

**Round** – A large clove planted too late to form daughter bulbs.

**Green garlic** – Immature garlic in the spring before bulbs have matured.

**Hardneck** – Type of garlic that produces a stiff flower stalk.

**Softneck** – Type of garlic that has a soft flower stalk that can be braided.

**Elephant garlic** – A member of the leek family that is grown and handled in a manner similar to garlic.