

Garlic

Allium sativum – Garlic, should be planted in rich, well-drained soil and full sun either in late fall or in early spring. If planting garlic in the spring, the result will be smaller garlic cloves at seasons end. When planting garlic, divide each bulb into cloves and plant each clove separately. The largest cloves that are planted will be rewarded with the largest garlic bulbs at the end of the growing season. Plant each clove 6-8" apart and 2-4" deep, with the pointy end of the clove facing upwards. Fall cloves should be planted deeper than cloves planted in spring and require covering with mulch after planting. Fertilize with vegetable food or cover with a layer of compost in spring. Keeping your garden free of weeds is especially important as the weeds will take nutrients away from the garlic themselves. Harvest when the leafy tops die back, usually in July or later. Air dry the bulbs and store them in a cool and dry spot. Tops can be removed or braided together while in storage.

Types of Garlic

Hardneck garlic has a thick, rigid central stalk. It generally produces large cloves and has a stronger, 'hot' or spicy flavor. This type of garlic produces a hard flower stalk called a 'scape' in early spring. If the scape is cut off when it appears, you are encouraging the plant to send its energy into producing a nice, fat garlic head instead of sending its energy into a flower. Garlic scapes can be eaten and are a delicious specialty in early spring that has a mild garlic flavor.

Softneck garlic has a flexible stem that flops over when it is ready to be harvested. Softneck garlic generally produces smaller, more numerous cloves that grow in layers. This type of garlic can be braided and stores the longest (9-12 months). Softneck garlic matures faster than hardneck and will not produce scapes. This type of garlic is typically grown commercially and what you would expect to find at the local grocery store.

Elephant Garlic

Allium ampeloprasum babbingtonii is more closely related to the leek than garlic. Elephant garlic is a biennial, meaning it completes its lifecycle in two growing seasons. Typically, a single bulb will form in the first year. During bulb formation all the plant's resources will go into sustaining that single bulb. This helps it survive into its second year. The second year the plant will throw up flower stalks (scapes) and then typically divides into multiple separate bulbs. Scapes can be cut off and cooked as well. Elephant garlic bulbs are giant and can weigh over a pound at the end of its first harvest season. After the first season, you can decide to harvest or leave the bulbs to encourage smaller bulbs to continue the process. Elephant garlic is sweeter and less intense than true garlic and can be used raw, roasted, stir-fried, and in many types of recipes.

Garlic...continued

Hardneck Varieties

This is a comprehensive list, but we may not have all varieties at all times.

German Porcelain

A dependable and easily grown variety favored by Northern growers. One of the best varieties for flavor and storage. Its raw flavor is pungent and spicy, mellowing when cooked. A large bulb type which makes it easier to peel. Great for roasting.

Spanish Roja

One of the most popular hardneck varieties that can be eaten raw. It has delightful coloring with easy to peel cloves. The outstanding hot flavor makes it a favorite with chefs and foodies alike. This is a must have variety for every garden. Stores well for 4-6 months.

Softneck Varieties

This is a comprehensive list, but we may not have all varieties at all times.

Early Italian Purple

One of the easiest and most vigorous varieties to grow. This variety is said to be a fairly mild garlic, with middle of the scale flavor and pungency, but with rich tones. This flavor, combined with the color and long storage life, has made Early Italian Purple a favorite garlic for gardeners. It translates equally well either fresh or cooked.

Inchelium Red

Produces a large, flattened bulb, 6-7 centimeters in diameter. Each bulb contains anywhere from 12 to 20 plump cloves arranged in layers. The outer ivory bulb wrappers are several sheets thick which protect the bulb and enhances its storage quality. Inchelium Red garlic has a mildly pungent taste with a medium level of spiciness.

Late Italian Purple

A very late maturing variety that perfectly extends the garlic season. This variety is medium in size with a short round bulb. The skin is very tight and harder to work with but will keep the garlic fresh longer and store better. Nice mild flavor with medium heat.

Nootka Rose

Beautifully colored silverskin with a bold, robust taste with medium to hot flavor. This Northwest heirloom variety comes from the San Juan Islands. Bulbs tend to be larger for a silverskin variety and will typically have 15-20 cloves per bulb. It is very attractive braided.

Silver Rose

Flavor is rich and bold and mild in pungency. After a few months of storage, the flavor becomes hotter when used raw. The bulbs are large and firm, with silver rose colored skin. This variety is great for braiding.