



## Planting Garlic

Plant the organic Garlic Collection this fall and harvest fresh garlic next summer. The collection includes at least ½ pound of hardneck and softneck garlic, which will produce enough garlic for an average family of four.

Chesnok Red is a hardneck garlic that originated in the Republic of Georgia. Each bulb produces about 10 large, purple-striped cloves that are especially delicious raw or baked. Harvest early in the summer.

The softneck garlic variety may be California Early, Lorz Italian or Inchelium Red — grower's choice, but guaranteed to please. These Artichoke-type varieties produce layers of 10 to 20 cloves around the center stem and are great for roasting or mincing raw into olive oil for dip. Softneck garlic has pliable stems that you can braid together to make a hanging garlic braid. Bulbs are ready to harvest in midsummer and will keep for up to eight months in storage.

### Planting

Plant four to six weeks before the ground freezes to ensure good root growth prior to winter: early October in northern regions and November through December in southern regions.

Garlic requires full sun and likes rich, well-drained, slightly acidic soil. Plant in a raised bed, mounded garden soil or a Garlic Grow Bag to ensure good drainage. Prepare the soil by loosening it 8" deep, adding compost and removing weeds.

Just before planting, break bulbs apart into individual cloves, leaving their papery covers intact. Take care not to bruise them. Plant them pointed end up, about 2" deep and 4" to 5" apart. Cover with soil and then mulch immediately with 2" of loose straw, dry grass clippings or shredded leaves. If possible, mulch again after the soil freezes to protect the plants from the winter cold. Garlic may or may not sprout in the fall.

### Growing Next Year

Keep your garlic patch weeded, starting in spring. Fertilize with an organic fertilizer in the early spring when new leaves begin to emerge, following package instructions. Water, as needed, if rain does not keep the soil moist. Reduce watering and allow the soil to become drier in the few weeks before harvest.

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## **Garlic Scapes**

Hardneck garlic sends up flower stalks, called scapes, in early summer. Snip off the scapes as they emerge from the center of the plant or as they begin to curl. Removing the scapes allows the plants to concentrate their energy on increasing the size of the bulbs. Saute the trimmings with olive oil or grind into pesto. They're delicious!

## **Harvesting**

Harvest garlic in early to midsummer, depending on the variety. It's time to harvest when the cloves are well developed and beginning to bulge, and the bulbs have formed a papery layer around them. The lower leaves usually begin to die back at this time. Dig up a bulb or two to check progress. For longest storage, it's important to harvest the bulbs before they split or the papery cover begins to separate at the top of the bulb.

To harvest, loosen the soil around the bulbs with a garden fork and lift gently to avoid breaking the stems. Shake and brush the soil off freshly dug garlic bulbs and roots, but do not wash them. As you harvest, keep bulbs out of direct sunlight, which causes sunburn and reduces storage life.

## **Curing**

Leave the stems, leaves and roots intact and lay them in a single layer on sheets of newspaper in a dry, shady, well-ventilated place to dry and cure. You can also hang them in small bunches.

After two to three weeks, cut the stems to about 1" to 2" above the bulb and trim the roots close to the bulb. Continue to cure for another two weeks or so. In wet climates and humid weather, increase ventilation with a fan to hasten drying. Be sure the papery coverings and stems are completely dry before storing.

## **Storing**

Store garlic in a dark, well-ventilated place around 60 degrees F, or at cool room temperature. Air circulation is important! If possible, store in mesh or paper bags. Do not store in the refrigerator because the cold, moist air may cause sprouting and will decrease storage life. Check stored bulbs occasionally for decay and use damaged bulbs promptly. Hardneck garlic keeps for about six months, softneck garlic for six to eight months.

For more information and slide shows on how to plant and harvest garlic, please visit our website.