

GARLIC

Garlic is planted in the fall, but early enough so that the soil is still 60 degrees F.

The soil should be loose and rich. The best way to get that is to dig compost into your garden.

To plant, leave the skin on the bulbs. Do not separate the cloves from the bulb *until* you are ready to plant. Plant the clove's root end down, pointed end up, 8" apart in the row.

Cover them with 2" of soil and 6" of mulch. The mulch will help keep the soil temperature stable—garlic doesn't like a lot of temperature fluctuations. Leave the mulch on next spring as it will help control weeds and conserve soil moisture.

The cloves may sprout in the fall, but don't be concerned. They'll survive.

In early spring, as the crop just starts to emerge, you can add fertilizer. **Don't fertilize after May 15**.

Keep irrigating if necessary, and keep the weeds at bay. Like any onion family plant, Garlic doesn't compete well with weeds.

You will probably see some curly stems ('scapes') that form as the bulb matures. Pick these off so they don't inhibit the bulb formation.

Harvest after the leaves start to die back, when there are still 5 green leaves still on the plant. This will occur in June or early July!

Dig the bulbs carefully, trying not to pull the stalk out of the bulb. Don't wash them, don't let them get bruised, just brush off most of the soil. Put them in a dark and ventilated area right away so they can cure. Hanging them in a shed works well. You can add a light breeze from a fan if there isn't much air movement in your area. This drying period is for 4-6 weeks.

Once they are dry, cut the roots off and cut the stem 1.5" above the bulb.

Store the dried, clean bulbs in a 50-70 degree area—not the refrigerator.

You can hold back the nicest bulbs for replanting in the fall.

www.abrahamsonnurseries.com

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