

**GARLIC (*Allium Sativum*)** (For organic garlic varieties, see note below)

The garlic you have received has been grown especially for "seed," and has been allowed to remain in the ground for an average of 7-10 days longer than garlic grown for consumption. The brown sheath discoloration and staining are normal. Heads are graded to a minimum of 1¾". Cosmetic appearance of "seed" garlic generally does not affect productivity.

**Note:** Under stressful conditions, softneck types may occasionally develop stiff necks. These seed cloves will, however, produce soft necks the following season.

Unless you are planting immediately, store your garlic bulbs in a cool, dry place, 50°F to 70°F (10°C to 24°C). Do not refrigerate. Leave the outer skin on the bulb and do not separate cloves from bulb until ready to plant.

Spend time preparing your soil. Garlic is a heavy feeder and, to grow big bulbs, you need highly fertile soil, well supplied with all major nutrients. Full sun is best. Because high humus content and good drainage are also very important, adding compost is advisable. Garlic prefers a pH in a range of 6.0 to 7.0.

Plant garlic from the first fall frost date until as late as November. The idea is to get good root growth but no top growth before winter. Spring planting will greatly reduce bulb size.

Plant individual cloves approximately six inches apart. Push the clove, root end down, about 1-2" into the soil, or place cloves in a furrow and cover with 2" of soil. Mulch with weed-free grass clippings, hay, straw, or leaves to a depth of 4-6" after the soil has frozen or in late fall.

In the spring, remove mulch and top dress with compost or complete fertilizer. This will give the crop a boost. It is not necessary in soil that you fertilized well in the fall, in which case, we suggest leaving the mulch in place.

Garlic does not do well with competition from weeds.

Consistent soil moisture is important and is especially critical during the bulbing period. Monitor moisture and water the plot as necessary. However, when garlic is nearing maturity, somewhat dry soil is best.

Garlic is in the onion family and can have the same insect pests and diseases as onions. However, well-fertilized garlic usually grows pest-free.

**"TOPPING."** Stiffneck garlic varieties should be topped in early summer. A hard round stem called a "scape" will grow upward, and a "topset" will begin to form. Cut or clip off the young, green topsets (with a few inches of the scape), and use them in stir-fry. If you do not cut off the young scapes from your stiffneck-type garlic, the bulb size will be reduced by an average of 30%. Left to grow, the topset will ripen very small "cloves," which are too small to be useful.

Harvest in summer when the bottom leaves are beginning to yellow and before more than one or two leaves turn brown, which should be in June through August, depending on your location. Do not leave in the ground too long or bulbs will separate and rot. Dig garlic with a spading fork, being careful not to bruise the bulbs. Brush off the soil or wash the bulbs.

Good curing (partial drying) is important to prevent decay during storage. Cure in a warm, shady place (a little sun is ok) with good air movement. To avoid potential damage to curing bulbs, *avoid direct sun at high, late-summer temperatures*. Hang in bundles or spread as a single layer on screens or drying racks. Allow to dry until neck is dry and outer skin is papery, approximately 2-3 weeks. Store by braiding or tying several heads together and hanging up, or store by cutting tops off and placing bulbs in a mesh bag or open container. Keep in a cool, dry place rather than the refrigerator. The best temperature for longest storage is 34°F (1°C).

**Note:** Varieties listed "OG" in our catalog were grown organically, but are not certified organic.