



955 Benton Ave., Winslow, ME 04901 • Phone: 1-877-564-6697 • Fax: 1-800-738-6314

Email: service@johnnyseeds.com • Website: Johnnyseeds.com

GARLIC (*Allium sativum*)

Unless you are planting immediately, store garlic bulbs in a cool, dry place, 50–60°F (10–16°C) with good air circulation. Bulbs can be stored in optimum conditions for several weeks before planting. Do not refrigerate. Do not separate cloves from bulb until ready to plant.

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. The cosmetic appearance of seed garlic generally does not affect productivity. Heads with broken bulb wrappers are fine for seed stock.

SITE SELECTION & SOIL FERTILITY: Garlic prefers full sun and well-drained soil with a pH of 6.0–7.0. The addition of compost helps with drainage (as well as nutrient requirements). Raised beds are also helpful for increasing drainage in sites with heavy soil. Poorly drained soil can lead to disease and/or poor bulb formation.

Garlic is a heavy feeder. Prepare the soil in the fall by adding compost or a slow-release nitrogen fertilizer, such as alfalfa meal, according to soil test results. In spring, side dress with a fast-release source of Nitrogen, such as fish emulsion, when shoots are 6" tall.

PLANTING: Plant garlic from the first fall frost date until as late as November. The goal is to get good root growth but no top growth before winter. Spring planting will greatly reduce bulb size. Plant individual cloves approximately 6" apart in rows 24" apart or 3–4 rows per bed with 6" spacing in and between rows. Push the clove, root end (rounded end) down, about 2–3" into the soil, or place cloves in a furrow and cover with 2–3" of soil. Cover with 3–4" of mulch from grass clippings, straw, or leaves.

In spring, consistent soil moisture is important and is especially critical during the bulbing period. Monitor moisture and water the plot as necessary. When garlic is nearing maturity, reduce irrigation.

Keep the growing area free of weeds; garlic does not compete well with weeds and weed pressure can reduce bulb size by up to 30%. To minimize the risk of disease, plant only seed stock quality garlic, practice a 3–5 year crop rotation out of *Alliums*, ensure good drainage, and scout for disease regularly.

TOPPING STIFFNECK GARLIC: Stiffneck garlic will form flower stalks, called garlic scapes. The scapes are hard, long, curled stalks that appear 1–2 months after the first leaves. "Top" the plants by cutting the scape from the plant when the scape begins to curl; topping encourages the plant to focus energy on growing the bulb rather than the scape. If the scape is not cut, bulb size will be reduced. Left to grow, the scape will ripen very small cloves, which are too small to be useful. Scapes are edible; use scapes for pesto or in dishes that call for garlic. **Note:** Under stressful conditions, softneck types may occasionally develop stiff necks. These seed cloves will, however, produce soft necks the following season.

HARVEST: Harvest in summer when the bottom leaves are beginning to yellow and when 3–4 lower 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 before curing and storing the bulbs.

CURING: After harvest, good curing (partial drying) is important to prevent decay during storage. Cure in a warm, shady place with good air circulation (gentle air flow is important; do not point a fan directly at the curing bulbs). To avoid potential damage to curing bulbs, *avoid high heat and 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 the 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, well-ventilated place. The best temperature for longest storage is 45–55°F (7–13°C) and about 50–60% relative humidity. Garlic stored in the refrigerator is likely to sprout.

REV 5/15/2018 LG, ld, pz, pg, rk, ld