



GROWING GARLIC

Garlic is an annual crop that takes 9 months to mature. Unlike most vegetables, garlic is planted in the fall and harvested the following summer of the next season. Garlic requires a cold period during winter to produce a bulb the next season. Because garlic is planted at a time when your garden is mostly empty (October), it is important to remember to leave room for the next season's spring and summer crops.

FALL PLANTING

The best time to plant garlic is during the first two weeks of October. This avoids early sprouting but allows cloves to establish roots before the ground freezes.

- Choose a spot to plant the garlic that gets plenty of sunlight and that you have no other plans to plant in until next July.
- Prepare your bed, loosening the soil and raking it smooth. Break apart individual cloves from the bulb, leaving the papery skin on each.
- Plant root side down (pointed end of clove facing up), 4-6 inches apart and 2 inches deep.
- Water newly planted bed well at the time of planting and one time weekly until the first frost comes. Watering helps garlic get well established to survive the winter.
- Mulch the bed with 2-4 inches of straw or leaf mulch. This provides a “blanket” for the garlic during the winter.

SPRING/SUMMER MAINTENANCE

Garlic will begin to sprout in the spring and continue to grow throughout the season.

- Leave the straw mulch covering beds to keep weeds from competing with the garlic plants.
- Water thoroughly once a week as you would other crops.
- Garlic planted from the “hard neck” variety (the type GRP distributes), will shoot up a hard stalk (also called ‘scape’) through the center of its leaves as it matures. When the scape comes up around June it will begin making its first circle (see image to the right), at this point snip it off close to the base. This will encourage further bulb development.
- Weed! Be sure to keep weeds in check. Weeds compete with the garlic for nutrients and negatively affect bulb size.
- Eat the scapes! They are delicious sauted in oil or used fresh as you would use garlic. The flavor is the same as garlic but much milder.

SUMMER HARVEST

- Harvest when 4-6 layers of leaves turn brown usually around the 1st or 2nd week of July. Using a spading fork (gardening fork) or shovel loosen the soil around the garlic, staying far enough away from the bulbs so you don't puncture it. Garlic should easily pull out of the ground. Garlic can be used immediately after harvest or cured (dried) for storage.
- To cure the garlic for storage gently brush the soil off the bulb and hang or place on an old window screen at room temperature in a dark space for 2-3 weeks. Be sure to cure in a space with good air circulation.
- Re-use the now available bed space to plant mid to late summer crops like lettuce or greens.

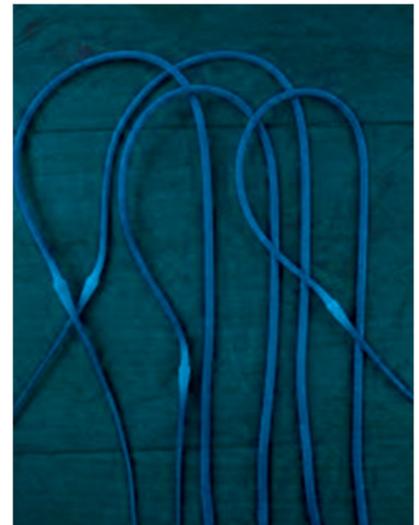
STORING GARLIC SEED FOR THE NEXT PLANTING

Garlic from this year's harvest can be used as seed for future seasons.

- For the best harvest select your largest cloves to save for seeds to plant.
- Allow the bulbs you plan on using as seed to cure, or dry, for 3-4 weeks in either a well-ventilated room or a dry, shady spot outside. If you are unsure if garlic was stored properly, its best to start again with cloves from a trusted source.

IDEAL PLANTING CONDITIONS

- Well drained soil
- Minimal weed competition
- Full sun
- Plenty of organic matter (compost)



Garlic scapes



This Resource Guide is prepared by Keep Growing Detroit for participants in the Garden Resource Program. For more info please contact 313-757-2635, keepgrowingdetroit@gmail.com or visit our website at WWW.DETROITAGRICULTURE.NET