



Hardneck Garlic Planting Instructions

TEN Clues for Planting Garlic

1. **Perform a Soil Test.** Even if you only check the pH of the soil, that is worthwhile. Garlic grows best in soil with a pH (percent hydrogen) around 6.0 - 7.0. What other necessary nutrients are your soil lacking? We use www.AGvise.com, MidWestLabs.com, for soil testing.
2. **PLAN to PLANT GARLIC IN THE FALL** about four to six weeks before the ground freezes. This gives the clove a chance to establish roots and anchor themselves into the ground to prevent frost heaves. **PLANT IN A LOCATION WITH FULL SUNLIGHT.**
3. **PREPARE THE SOIL** by loosening it to a depth of 6" - 8" and mix in aged manure and slow-release, granular organic fertilizer. Ideally, the soil should be "fluffy". If possible, create raised-bed "rows" and plant the garlic in these long, raised rows. Rows are to be 4"-6" tall and mounded. The raised rows makes harvesting easier.
4. **BREAK UP THE GARLIC BULBS** into individual cloves, it is okay if the papery covering is absent.
5. **PLANT CLOVES 3" – 4" DEEP**, orienting them so the pointy ends face up. Root-side down.
6. Water gently to settle the soil, and then cover the bed with mulch, such as leaves or straw (don't use hay, as it contains seeds). Even as air temperatures drop, the soil will stay warm enough for the newly planted cloves to establish roots before the ground freezes. Sometimes you'll see some green shoots form in fall; that's fine and won't harm plants. They'll begin growing in earnest in spring.
7. Next spring and summer, **keep the bed weeded and watered** (but not too wet).
8. **Apply organic nitrogen in June** (*and other NPK based on soil test*). Garlic are heavy nitrogen feeders, in their early growth, and need to establish large, robust plants, in order for them to develop large garlic bulbs. **Caution:** Do not give the garlic plants too much nitrogen, or they will grow tall like corn, and the bulbs will be very small. Phosphate is also an important nutrient.
9. **IN LATE JUNE, REMOVE THE GARLIC SCAPES** after they appear. By removing the curly garlic scapes, the plant will put more energy into making larger garlic bulbs.
10. **HARVEST ON TIME! DON'T WAIT TOO LONG.** Plan to harvest right around the first of August. When the plant's leaves are two-thirds yellow or brown, most garlic should be dug up. Do not procrastinate about digging up your garlic thinking the bulbs will continue to get bigger. They won't. When garlic bulbs are left in the ground too long, the wrappers that protect the cloves begin to deteriorate and the cloves can rot.