



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 at 7.0. Contact your local soil scientist (County Extension) for more information.
- 2. 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. In Montana, this is right around October 15. We've planted as late of November 20th. **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 a 4" of mulch, such as leaves or straw. 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.
- 8.** Apply organic nitrogen in early June. Garlic are heavy nitrogen feeders and need to establish large, robust plants, in order for them to develop large garlic bulbs.
- 9. REMOVE THE GARLIC SCAPE** after it appears. Simply bend and snap off. By removing the scapes, the plant will put more energy into making larger garlic bulbs. Garlic Scapes can be used to make excellent pesto. (*try blending scapes, nuts, seeds, white beans, parmesan cheese, oil, and basil*).
- 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.