



Garlic Planting Guide

Gardeners who can grow onions can grow garlic since the culture is similar. Garlic grows best on friable (crumbly) loamy soils that are fertile and high in organic matter. As a general recommendation, apply three pounds of 12-12-12 per 100 square feet. Heavy clay soils will cause misshaped bulbs and make harvesting difficult. Very dry conditions also will cause irregularities, so keep the soil evenly moist during extended dry spells. Add organic matter to the soil, such as well-rotted manure or compost, on a yearly basis to keep it friable.

In Indiana and Ohio, garlic should be planted very early in March or April to permit full leaf development. Later spring planting is not successful. It has been found that long days and warm temperatures favor bulb development in the garlic plant. As soon as bulbing starts, leaf initiation ceases. For highest yields, therefore, the cloves must be planted early enough to permit the development of large vegetative plants during the short cool days of March and April. Select only larger cloves for the best garlic. Plant garlic three to five inches apart in an upright position (pointy side up) at a depth of one-half to one inch deep. Setting the bulbs upright will ensure a straight neck. Allow 18 to 30 inches between rows. Do not divide the bulbs into cloves until you are ready to plant, since early separation results in decreased yields.

The bulbs may be harvested when tops start to dry. This is usually in August. Bulbs should be dug up rather than pulled to avoid stem injury. Allow the tops to dry. After the bulbs have dried, the tops and roots can be removed with shears to within an inch of the bulbs. It is essential that garlic be well cured before going into storage. The mature bulbs are best stored at 32 degrees. At temperatures above 40 degrees, sprouts are produced more quickly. The humidity in storage should be near 65 to 70 percent at all times to discourage mold development and root formation. Properly stored, cloves should keep for six to seven months.

Few pests attack garlic. Your best way to avoid insects (such as onion maggot larva) is to follow good sanitation practices.

There have been varying degrees of success with fall plantings of garlic in central Indiana. Due to our severe winters and the probability of heaving from thawing and freezing, we do not advocate fall plantings.

Information taken from Ohio State University Extension Fact Sheet HYG-1627-92, found at <http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/1000/1627.html>

For more information on fall planting, visit the University of Minnesota Extension site at: www.extension.wmn.edu/distribution/cropsystems/DC7317.html