

Garlic Growing Instructions



Fall

After your garlic has been planted, mulch the bed with a couple inches of organic matter to insulate the garlic, suppress weeds, and regulate the temperature fluctuations in the fall and spring. Straw is our preferred choice since it is light, biodegrades quickly, and is available at most garden centres. Leaves, wood chips, and other organic matter can also be used.



Do not mulch if your soil stay excessively wet or is slow to drain.



Winter

Garlic needs a cold dormant period during the winter. It's fine just as it is.



Spring

Your garlic will send up new growth through the mulch. Remove the mulch only if it is very thick (more than 4") to help the new growth come up more easily. Ensure the area is well weeded and watered. For most in-ground plantings, regular rainfall is usually sufficient to ensure even soil moisture. You may also choose to add extra compost and organic matter to the soil as garlic is a heavy feeder and prefers a soil rich in organic matter.



If your soil is sandy or if there is a drought or heat spell, you may need to water the plants once a week to maintain even soil moisture.

In late spring, garlic will send up a long curly scape. When it curls and before the flower head opens, break or cut it off to encourage the plant to divert its energy into producing bigger bulbs rather than into flower production. Use the scapes just as you would use garlic.



Summer

In July, stop watering the garlic. Over watering will cause the bulbs to swell too much and not dry or cure properly.

When about half the leaves have turned brown (starting end of July), harvest the garlic by loosening the soil with a garden fork or shovel and pulling the stalk straight up and out to remove the bulb.

Brush off excess dirt and cure the bulb by hanging it in a warm, dry, well-ventilated location for 2-3 weeks out of direct sunlight. A garage, shed, or basement are excellent places to hang the garlic. Avoid hanging more than 20 heads of garlic in the same bunch.

To promote good air circulation, we suggest leaving a door open or a fan running to help cure the garlic. After 2-3 weeks, brush off any excess dirt and cut off the roots and stalk. Do not cut or puncture the skin surrounding the individual cloves and head of garlic.

Store at room temperature (15-18C) in a dark, dry place for best results. A brown paper bag is ideal. Set aside damaged bulbs or bulbs where the wrapper did not fully seal the individual cloves for use within 1-2 weeks.

