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## **GARLIC (*Allium Sativum*) and ELEPHANT GARLIC (*Allium ampeloprasum*)**

**Unless you are planting immediately, store garlic bulbs in a cool, dry place, 50°F to 60°F (10°C to 16°C) with good air circulation. Bulbs can be stored in optimum conditions for several weeks before planting. Do not refrigerate. Do not separate cloves from bulb until ready to plant. Elephant garlic will arrive already separated into individual cloves. Store these cloves as you would garlic bulbs if not planting immediately.**

**Plant garlic from the first fall frost date until as late as November. The goal is to get good root growth but no top growth before winter. Spring planting will greatly reduce bulb size.**

The garlic you have received has been grown especially for seed, and has been allowed to remain in the ground for an average of 7-10 days longer than garlic grown for consumption. The brown sheath discoloration and staining are normal. Heads are graded to a minimum of 1½". Cosmetic appearance of seed garlic generally does not affect productivity. Heads with broken bulb wrappers are fine for seed stock.

Garlic is a heavy feeder and, to grow big bulbs, you need highly fertile soil, well supplied with all major nutrients. Raised beds aid in larger bulb production, especially if trying to grow in heavier soils. Full sun is best. Because high humus content and good drainage are also very important, adding compost is advisable. Garlic prefers a pH of 6.5 to 7.0.

Plant individual cloves approximately four to six inches apart in rows 18-24" apart. Push the clove, root end down, about 1-2" into the soil, or place cloves in a furrow and cover with 2" of soil. Sow in well drained soil. Mulch with grass clippings, hay, straw or leaves to a depth of 4-6" directly after planting.

In the spring, remove mulch and top dress with compost or complete fertilizer. This will give the crop a boost. It is not necessary in soil that you fertilized well in the fall, in which case, we suggest leaving the mulch in place.

Keep the growing area free of weeds; garlic does not compete well with weeds.

Consistent soil moisture is important and is especially critical during the bulbing period. Monitor moisture and water the plot as necessary. However, when garlic is nearing maturity, reduce planned irrigation schedule to keep soil drier.

Garlic is in the onion family and can have the same insect pests and diseases as onions. To minimize pest and disease pressure it is important to purchase seed stock quality garlic, practice a 3-5 year crop rotation out of Alliums, and scout regularly.

**TOPPING GARLIC:** Stiffneck garlic varieties should be topped in early summer. A hard round stem called a scape will grow upward, and a topset will begin to form. While still curled and tender, cut or clip off the young, green topsets (with a few inches of the scape), and use them in stir-fry, pickling recipes, and various other culinary recipes. If you do not cut off the young scapes from your stiffneck-type garlic, the bulb size will be reduced by an average of 30%. Left to grow, the topset will ripen very small cloves, which are too small to be useful. **Note:** Under stressful conditions, softneck types may occasionally develop stiff necks. These seed cloves will, however, produce soft necks the following season.

Harvest in summer when the bottom leaves are beginning to yellow and before more than one or two leaves turn brown, which should be in June through August, depending on your location. Do not leave in the ground too long or bulbs will separate and rot. Dig garlic with a spading fork, being careful not to bruise the bulbs. Brush off the soil before curing and storing the bulbs.

After harvest, good curing (partial drying) is important to prevent decay during storage. Cure in a warm, shady place with good air circulation. To avoid potential damage to curing bulbs, *avoid direct sun at high, late-summer temperatures*. Hang in bundles or spread as a single layer on screens or drying racks. Allow to dry until neck is dry and outer skin is papery, approximately 2-3 weeks. Store by braiding or tying several heads together and hanging up, or store by cutting tops off and placing bulbs in a mesh bag or open container. Keep in a cool, dry place. The best temperature for longest storage is 34°F (1°C) and about 65-70% relative humidity (RH).

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