

Garlic is one of the easiest and most low-maintenance crops that you can plant and grow right at home.

When do you plant garlic? While garlic can be planted in the spring, it is best planted each fall, anytime from mid-October to early November, in a ground or raised bed with full sun and well-draining soil. Visit plantkingdom.net/learn for tips on prepping a ground or raised bed.

Where should you purchase garlic for planting? One head of garlic will yield about 6 to 12 new heads of garlic each year. When planting garlic for the first time you will want to purchase your garlic from your local garden center (like The Plant Kingdom), farmer's market, or reputable online source, rather than the grocery store. Grocery store garlic has been treated with chemical preservatives and chilled which can inhibit sprouting and growth.

How to properly plant garlic...

#1 Break apart the head into individual cloves. Each clove you plant will produce one new head of garlic.

#2 Prepare your planting area by creating planting rows so that each clove can be placed about six inches apart and two inches deep.

#3 Plant the cloves by placing them point side up and root side down (think Hershey kiss) and cover with soil. You can also add a slow-release, all-purpose fertilizer at the time of planting and then again two times in the spring about a month apart.

#4 Apply a light layer of mulch to insulate the bulbs, help retain moisture, and suppress weeds.

When should you harvest garlic? Garlic takes about eight to nine months from planting to harvest. Garlic planted in the fall should typically be harvested around Father's Day and garlic planted in the spring should be harvested by the 4th of July. On average, you will yield higher production when you plant in the fall vs. spring.

How to properly harvest garlic...

#1 When the soil is dry enough to work, begin at the end of your garlic row, insert your spade, shovel, or garden fork fully into the soil, and gently pry up the garlic head, leaving all parts, including roots, garlic head, and foliage intact, but gently knock off any loose soil.

#2 Place the whole plant in a cool, dry, shaded area such as a covered porch or basement to cure. Avoid environments that get really hot such as an uninsulated detached garage or shed.

#3 Allow to cure for about 10-14 days and then you can cut the majority of the tops off and let cure again for another 10-14 days.

#4 After the second 10-14 day curing period you can then clean the heads up by removing any dirt or loose skins, trimming the roots, and cutting the stem short. Now your garlic is ready to store in a cool dry space to be used all winter.

Once you start planting your own garlic supply you should continue to use this same garlic to replant each year. Garlic is known to adapt to your specific soil and growing environment, producing better and better each year.