

Growing Garlic

Growing your own full flavoured garlic is easy, and means you'll have a fantastic homegrown alternative to the tasteless imported garlic found on many supermarket shelves.

Planting: Prepare weed- free beds in full sun positions. Dig in some soil improver, sheep or cow manure. Place garlic bulbs in the refrigerator for 1 week, prior to planting. Seed garlic bubs can be broken down into a number of cloves (usually about 6-10). Rake over and level beds for planting, then plant garlic cloves with the pointy end facing upwards, 3cm below the soil surface and cover well. Space rows 30cm apart with 10cm between plants. Best planting time is late March and April. Garlic can be planted as late as the 22nd of June, but the later you plant, the smaller the resulting bulbs will be at harvest time.

Growing On: Once in the ground constant watering is required. Twice a week on heavy soil and more often in sandy soils. Fertilise regularly but lightly with an organic liquid fertiliser(seaweed or fish is ideal) for the first two months. Avoid feeding in the latter months as too much fertilizer promotes too much leaf growth at the expense of bulb growth. Stop watering when half the leaves turn yellow/brown.

Harvesting Garlic: Start harvesting when the plants tops turn yellow, usually November-December. Be careful not to damage the bulb when removing it from the ground. Shake off the soil and hang to dry in a cool dark place out of direct sunlight. Cut off the roots and tops after a couple of weeks and store in mesh bags. Garlic should last until the following autumn-winter.

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