

PLANTING GUIDE FOR GARLIC IN OUR NECK OF THE WOODS

Hardneck varieties of garlic such as German Red or Russian Red grow best in our area and should be planted mid October to early November. Here's how:

1. Soil should be well drained and pH should read between 6.0 and 7.0. Begin by incorporating a generous amount of compost (2-3") into the row. A high phosphorus, all natural fertilizer such as Espoma Garden-Tone worked into the top couple of inches of soil at a rate of 2 cups per 16' row is what we recommend.
2. Separate out the individual cloves just before planting, and place each clove second knuckle deep, tip up and root down, 4-6" apart. Pat soil down firmly on top. Label your row so that you will remember where and what (especially the variety) you planted. Take it from us, this is important- haha. Water well, but don't saturate. Good root development will occur without top growth.
3. When the soil starts to freeze up sometime around the end of November, mulch with 4-6" of straw. This will keep the ground frozen, thus preventing heaving from freeze/thaw cycles.
4. In the spring when growth starts, pull back the mulch and fertilize with a light application of Garden-Tone(3/4-1 cup per 16'). Keep your planting weed-free. Keep soil moisture consistent but moderate. Garlic has a delicate root system and should not dry out or be too wet.
5. Around May 5th apply an all natural, high nitrogen fertilizer such as Dr. Earth Liquid Nitro Big. Remember the larger the leaves, the larger the cloves. Repeat this application June 1. This is all the fertilizing needed. The plant will go into bulb production as soon as the days shorten after the solstice, June 21. We recommend cutting all flower scapes (stalks) that emerge so that energy will go into producing larger bulbs. Note: these scape tips are fine eating in a stir fry or whatever else comes to mind.
6. In late July or into August when half the foliage has ripened off (turned brown and flopping over), it's time to dig your garlic. Gently dig under the plant so as not to spear or bruise the bulbs. You should have some beauties!
7. Brush off excess soil but do not wash. Leave foliage attached and hang in a warm, well-ventilated place for two weeks. At this point make sure stem is dry all the way to the bulb. Brush off any remaining soil, cut back foliage to within 1" of bulb, and trim roots close to the base of the bulb.
8. Store in a dark place, cooler than 50 degrees. Storage life is approximately 6 months.