



Bookcliff Gardens

nursery & landscape

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Garlic

Types and Varieties

Hardneck Garlic is the type favored by cooks for its deep flavor and ease of peeling. They are a moderate keeper. One pound of hardneck garlic should plant about a 25' row, one pound of elephant garlic will plant a 4-5' row.

- **German Red:** this variety produces large bulbs with 8-12 cloves. German Red enjoys cold winters. It is ideal for sautéing in butter.
- **Spanish Roja:** cloves vary in color from teak to brown. Each bulb contains 7-13 cloves that peel easily. Very good for eating raw or cooked.
- **Elephant Garlic:** each bulb contains 4-6 huge cloves that have a mild garlic flavor. Each clove should grow into a 5-8 ounce bulb.

Planting

Garlic is best planted in the fall. This gives the bulb time to sprout good roots but not enough time to produce leaves. Garlic enjoys a loose fertile soil with lots of organic material. Make sure to add a good amount of decomposed organic matter such as **Soil Pep** or compost before planting.

Break your bulbs into individual cloves. Some cloves will be large and some will be small. Plant the larger cloves and use the smaller cloves in the kitchen. Plant your cloves 2-4" deep and at least 4-8" apart. To grow the largest bulbs, consider spacing your plants 6-12" apart. Elephant garlic should be planted 4-6" deep and 12" apart. Occasionally, a fall planted elephant garlic bulb will fail to divide into segments. Instead, it forms a single "round", like

an onion. These “rounds” can be replanted the following fall and will become a very large segmented bulb next year.

Growing

Keep your area well weeded. Take care not to damage the shallow roots when cultivating. Garlic needs to be fertilized in spring as soon as it starts growing. Use Bookcliff Gardens Choice Vegetable Garden Fertilizer once a month or a soluble fertilizer like Miracle-Gro applied every week to 10 days. While the leaves are rapidly growing, keep the soil moist as you would any other leafy green such as lettuce or spinach. When summer arrives, garlic stops making leaves and starts forming bulbs. Discontinue fertilizing once the bulb starts to form.

Seed stalks

“Hardneck” varieties of garlic put up a tall, woody flowering stalk that produces bulblets at the top. Do not allow the plant to put energy into making these “seeds”. Cut the seed stalks off as soon as the flower head has reached 8-9” tall.

Harvest And Curing

As the bulbs mature, the leaves turn brown. When there are still 5-6 green leaves remaining on the plant, dig down and examine a plant every few days to check the bulb. If the bulb is dug too early, the skins will not have formed around each clove. If the bulbs are dug too late, the cloves will have started to spread apart in the soil. When the bulbs are ready to be dug, loosen the soil with a spading fork or shovel before carefully pulling out the plant. Immediately brush off the soil from around the roots. Do so gently. Drying is the essential part of curing the bulb so do not wash them with water. Immediately move the newly dug garlic out of direct sunlight. Some people tie their plants up by the leaves or stalks in loose bundles. Others spread the bulbs in a single layer on a screen or drying rack. Garlic will store longer if it is cured with the stalk or leaves attached. Good air circulation is essential! The bulbs should cure from 3 to 4 weeks. Trim the roots after curing. If you are going to keep your garlic in sacks, cut the stalks off 1/2” above the bulb once they’ve cured. To best store your garlic, you need to provide air circulation to all sides of the bulb. Hang in netted sacks or dried bunches. Perfect storage conditions are 45-55° F.