

Rather than risk getting subpar garlic from the grocery store, try growing your own! It's an easy and rewarding crop.

Beyond its intense flavor and culinary uses, "the stinking rose" is also good in the garden as an insect repellent. It has very few problems with diseases that plague other veggies.

Garlic is usually planted in the fall or early winter. Roots develop before the ground freezes, and by early spring they start producing foliage.

Select a sunny spot. Garlic likes fertile, well-drained soil with a pH of 6.5 to 7. If your soil is on the thin, sandy side, add compost plus aged manure or 5-10-10 fertilizer. Lime the soil if you haven't done so recently.

Get cloves from a mail order seed company or a local nursery. Do not use cloves from the grocery store for planting. They may be unsuitable varieties for your area, and most are treated to make their shelf life longer, making them harder to grow.

Select large, healthy cloves, free of disease. The larger the clove, the bigger and healthier the bulb you will get the following summer.

Break apart cloves from the bulb a few days before planting, but keep the papery husk on each individual clove.

Place cloves 2 to 4 inches apart and 2 inches deep, in their upright position (pointy end up).



Mulch if you're expecting a colder, or longer than usual winter. A few inches of straw will do. Remove mulch in the spring after the threat of frost has passed.

With warmer temperatures, shoots will emerge through the ground. Cut off any spring-time flower shoots, as they may decrease bulb size.

Fertilize garlic in the early spring by side dressing with a nitrogen-heavy fertilizer such as blood meal, chicken manure, or a store-bought pelleted fertilizer.

Keep the planting site well weeded. Garlic doesn't do well with competition—it needs all available nutrients!

Water every 3 to 5 days during bulbing (mid-May through June). As mid-June approaches, taper off watering.

The center stalk is called a scape. Cut the scape once it starts to curl. They are exceptional when sliced, sauteed and used in your favorite recipes that call for garlic. Flavour in the scape is often more intense than a garlic bulb.

Harvest when the tops just begin to yellow and fall over.

'Cure' after harvest by hanging garlic bundles in a shaded, ventilated locale for two to three weeks. This allows moisture to escape and prepares the plant for long-term storage.

Garlic stores best in a cold room or cellar, or in a clay garlic keeper. Avoid storing in higher humidity, or in temperature extremes, such

as near a stove or sunlit window sill. Do not refrigerate garlic!

There are many varieties. For Ontario's climate, hard-neck varieties store best. (Soft-neck varieties, although decorative when braided, don't perform as well here.)

### Rocambole

Italian Purple, French Rocambole, Marino & Alison

Good keeper.



### Porcelain

Great Northern, Susan Delafields, Music and Georgia Crystal.

Strong vigorous plant 4-6 large cloves, beautiful large bulb with a fairly thick white wrapper. Easy to peel, large cloves are good for roasting.

Purple stripe

### Red Russian, Eureka Myrtis

Vivid purple stripes on the bulb wrappers, average 8 cloves per bulb. Strong, complex, rich flavour not overpowering. Excellent for roasting.