

HARRIS® SEEDS

Garlic Planting Guide

Garlic is widely popular for adding flavor to sauces, stews, soups, and much more! Garlic contains chemical compounds that reduce the risk of cancer and heart disease and that help lower blood pressure!

There are two main types of garlic: softneck (silverskin and artichoke) and hardneck (rocamboles, purple stripe, and porcelain). Softneck garlic is most common simply because it is easy to grow and keeps longer. It offers a nice mild flavor and is the type you find in most grocery stores. Hardneck garlic has fewer but much larger cloves per bulb than softneck types. As it grows it produces a stalk called a “scape.” Scapes can be harvested and used for cooking before the garlic itself is actually harvested. It is a very richly flavored garlic, generally stronger tasting than softneck. Hardneck garlic is most closely related to wild garlic, and is more winter hardy than softneck garlic for fall plantings.



Hardneck Garlic

Hardnecks have fewer but much larger cloves per bulb than softneck types. They have less of an outer bulb wrapper, which reduces their shelf life. Unlike softnecks, as they grow they produce a stalk that coils from the top called a “scape” or garlic flower. Scapes can be harvested and used for cooking before the garlic itself is actually harvested. Often termed topsetting or bolting varieties, hardneck garlic is most closely related to wild garlic.

Rocamboles tend to grow better in cold winter climates and produce large, tan or brown colored cloves, easily peeled skins, with

a deep full-bodied flavor, considered by some to be the finest tasting garlic of all.

Purple Stripes are named for their vivid purple striping on the bulb wrappers and cloves skins. Their taste is strong, complex and richly garlicky, without being overly sulfurous. Many regard purple stripes the best for roasting. Purple stripes are further broken down into two groups: Glazed and Marbled.

Porcelains produce a beautiful plant and impressive bulb. They have a satiny white wrapper with four to six cloves around a sturdy scape. Porcelains are easy to peel and great for cooking.

Softneck Garlic

Softneck is the garlic most commonly found in supermarkets. It generally has a longer shelf life than hardnecks, with more cloves/bulb than hardnecks. It is mildly flavored, adaptable to most climates, and can be braided easily.

Silver skin is the most common and easy to grow.

Artichoke has larger and fewer cloves/bulb and a milder flavor. The bulb wrappers on the artichoke varieties are coarser than the silverskin and may have some purple blotches.

Garlic Culture

Garlic is often planted in the fall, from September until about 4 weeks before the ground freezes. It can be spring planted as soon as the ground can be worked, but best bulb size is generally from fall planted garlic. It may be planted through January in the south. A well-drained soil with good tilth, plenty of organic matter and a pH between 6 and 7 is ideal for garlic. Since garlic commences growth very early in the season, it is important to avoid fields that are slow to drain in the spring. The conditions most likely to "winter-kill" garlic are very wet saturated soils with poor drainage.

The garlic bulb is separated into individual cloves before planting. The cloves are planted pointed side up. The clove is planted point up to ensure that when the stem grows it will be straight. Also, if the plant does not have to correct its orientation in the ground, more energy is directed toward plant growth. Plant individual cloves approximately 2-4" deep, 4-6" apart, in rows 18-24" apart.

The root system starts to develop in fall, and in winter the garlic is dormant. In spring, the stem will emerge from the ground, and the bulb will start to grow.

In hardneck (stiffneck) varieties, a seed scape, or flower stalk, will form on top of the stem in June (April in warmer regions). The scape is removed so that energy can be used to grow a larger bulb. The scape is cut or broken off soon after it appears, and may be eaten.

Garlic is ready to be pulled from mid-to-late July or August (earlier in warmer regions) when the lower leaves have died and turned brown.

Store garlic out of direct sunlight and in a place with good airflow. Allow bulbs to cure for 2-3 weeks, and then the stem and roots may be trimmed. Garlic can be stored at room temperature for immediate use, or between 32°-50° F with moderate humidity. Rocamboles and Purple Stripes are medium (6 months). Porcelains and Artichoke types store 8 to 10 months. Silverskins will often store a full year.

How much garlic do I plant?

$1 \text{ acre} = 43,560 \text{ sq ft} = 6,272,640 \text{ sq inches}$

$6,272,640 \text{ sq inches} \div x \text{ inches between rows} \div x \text{ inches within rows} = \# \text{ cloves/acre}$

$1 \text{ lb hardneck (5-6 bulbs) with 5-6 cloves per bulb} = @ 33 \text{ cloves}$

$1 \text{ lb softneck (7-10 bulbs) with 6-10 cloves per bulb} = @ 80 \text{ cloves}$

So, with 24" between rows and 6" within rows:

$6,272,640 \div 24 \div 6 = 43,560 \text{ cloves per acre}$

For hardneck garlic:

$43,560 \div 33 \text{ cloves} = \underline{1,320 \text{ lbs per acre}}$

For softneck garlic:

$43,560 \div 80 \text{ cloves} = \underline{545 \text{ lbs per acre}}$

Let's say you only want to plant a 25' (300") row at 6" spacing:

$300 \div 6 = 50 \text{ cloves needed}$

@33cloves/lb, you need about 1.5 lbs of hardneck garlic for a 25' row.

@80 cloves/lb, you need 0.6 lbs of softneck garlic for a 25' row.