

SEEDTIME

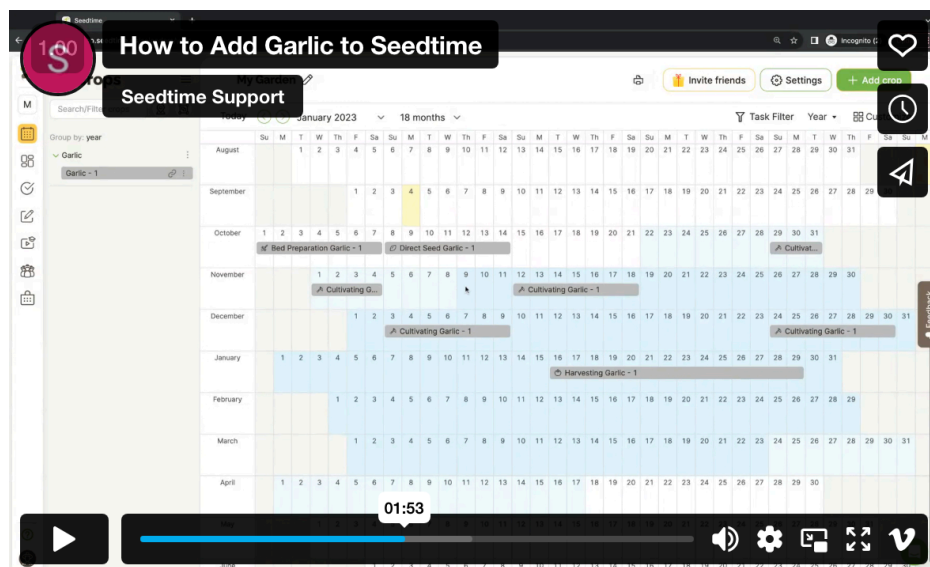


Garlic Growing Cheat Sheet

Have you ever wondered about the best tips and practices for growing garlic in your area? 🧄

In this cheat sheet we'll cover everything from choosing what type to grow, when to plant it, how to plant and care for it, all the way down to harvest time.

You can also see a short video on [how to add garlic to your Seedtime Calendar here](#).



You ready? Let's get rolling...



WHAT TYPE TO GROW:

The type of garlic you choose to grow — [hardneck](#) or [softneck](#) (click to view or order in the Seedtime Store) — can depend on your USDA hardiness zone as well as your culinary preferences. Here's a general guideline on what might work best in each zone:

Cold Climates:

- **Zone 3 and Zone 4:** [Hardneck varieties](#) are generally better suited for colder climates. They are more winter-hardy and can withstand the freezing temperatures common in these zones.

Moderate Climates:

- **Zone 5 and Zone 6:** Both [hardneck](#) and [softneck](#) varieties can be successfully grown in these moderate climates. Hardnecks offer complex flavors and are easier to peel, while softnecks store better.

Warm Climates:

- **Zone 7 and Zone 8:** [Softneck varieties](#) generally perform better in warmer climates. They are less winter-hardy than hardnecks but don't require the long winter chill period that hardnecks do, making them more suited to milder winters.

Mild-Winter Climates:

- **Zone 9 and Zone 10:** Softneck varieties are often the choice for these warmer zones. In fact, some softneck varieties can even be planted in the early spring if you missed the fall planting window.

Other Considerations:

- **Flavor Preferences:** Hardneck garlics often have a more complex and spicier flavor, while softneck garlics are generally milder.
- **Storage:** Softneck varieties usually store longer than hardneck types.
- **Scape Production:** If you enjoy garlic scapes, hardneck garlic produces these flower stalks, while softneck varieties generally do not.
- **Local Adaptation:** Sometimes local conditions break the rules. Local strains that have been grown in your area for generations may be best adapted to your specific climate, regardless of general guidelines for USDA zones.
- **Growing Conditions:** Soil, microclimate, and care can all influence how well any given variety performs. Consider experimenting with a few varieties to see what works best for you.

- **Consult Local Experts:** For the most tailored advice, consult local gardeners or your local agricultural extension service. They can offer variety suggestions based on local experience.

By selecting the garlic type that's best suited to your zone and needs, you'll be more likely to enjoy a successful and flavorful harvest.



WHEN TO PLANT:

Garlic is usually planted in the fall and harvested in the late spring or early summer, depending on the variety and local climate conditions.

We suggest planting garlic around 2-4 weeks before your average first frost date, although it can be planted even later in many locations.

Or, planting garlic based on USDA hardiness zones can be helpful, but it's essential to remember that these are general guidelines.

Local conditions, like soil quality and microclimates, can affect when garlic should be planted. Below are some general planting time suggestions based on USDA zones:

Cold Climates:

- **Zone 3:** Plant from late August to early September
- **Zone 4:** Plant from early to mid-September

Moderate Climates:

- **Zone 5:** Plant from mid to late September
- **Zone 6:** Plant from late September to early October

Warm Climates:

- **Zone 7:** Plant from early to mid-October

- **Zone 8:** Plant from mid to late October

Mild-Winter Climates:

- **Zone 9:** Plant from late October to November; you can sometimes get away with even later planting.
- **Zone 10:** Plant from late November to early December. In these zones, some gardeners opt for "spring planting," although fall is generally recommended for larger and more flavorful bulbs.

Remember, these are general recommendations. It's essential to adjust your planting times according to your local weather conditions and average first frost dates. Your local county extension service can also provide more precise planting recommendations based on local climate data.



HOW TO PLANT AND CARE FOR IT:

Select Quality Cloves:

- Buy garlic bulbs from a nursery or online seed supplier to ensure they are disease-free. You can find quality garlic in the [Seedtime Store here](#).
- Choose large, healthy bulbs. Break apart the bulbs to separate the cloves, but do this just before planting to keep them fresh.
- Select the largest, unbruised cloves for planting.

Prepare the Soil:

- Choose a sunny location with well-drained soil.
- Loosen the soil to a depth of at least 12 inches.
- Mix in organic matter (compost or well-rotted manure) to enrich the soil.
- Ensure the soil pH is between 6.0 and 7.0 for optimal growth.

Planting the Cloves:

- Plant cloves pointy end up, approximately 2-4 inches deep.
- Space cloves about 6-8 inches apart in the row, with rows spaced 10-14 inches apart.
- In colder climates, plant cloves deeper (up to 4 inches) for better winter protection.

Watering:

- Water the cloves after planting to help them establish roots.

- Keep the soil evenly moist but not waterlogged.

Mulching:

- After planting, cover the bed with 3-4 inches of organic mulch (straw, leaves, or grass clippings) to insulate the soil, retain moisture, and control weeds.

Winter Care:

- In colder climates, the mulch will help protect the garlic from freeze-thaw cycles.
- In milder climates, garlic will start to grow roots and may even sprout green shoots – this is normal.

Spring Care:

- When the ground warms up in spring, garlic will start to grow rapidly.
- Remove mulch in early spring to allow the soil to warm up, but keep the area weed-free and water during dry spells.
- For hardneck varieties, cut off the scapes (flowering stalks) when they emerge to encourage larger bulb development. Bonus tip: you can eat the scapes and they are quite tasty!

Fertilization:

- Side-dress garlic with a balanced fertilizer in early spring when green shoots emerge.

- Avoid high-nitrogen fertilizers, as these can encourage leafy growth at the expense of bulb development.

Monitor for Pests and Diseases:

- Keep an eye out for common garlic pests like onion thrips and diseases such as white rot and downy mildew.
- Practice crop rotation to prevent the buildup of diseases in the soil.

By following these planting and care steps, you can set the stage for a successful garlic harvest in the late spring or early summer.



WHEN TO HARVEST:

The timing for garlic harvest tends to depend on cues from the plant itself rather than a specific date.

Here are some general guidelines for harvesting garlic:

Summary of Harvest Times by Zone:

The following are a general guideline of garlic harvest times by zone. These are merely a guide to work off of if you don't know the harvest time for your location. Actual harvest times may vary depending on the variety of garlic you are growing as well as your specific location.

Zone 3: Late July to early August

Zone 4: Mid-July to late July

Zone 5: Early to mid-July

Zone 6: Late June to early July

Zone 7: Mid to late June

Zone 8: Early to mid-June

Zone 9: Late May to early June

Zone 10: Mid to late May

Signs to Look For:

- **Leaf Die-Back:** One of the most common signs that garlic is ready to be harvested is when the leaves start to turn yellow and die back. Typically, when about one-third to one-half of the leaves have yellowed, it's a good time to harvest.
- **Inspect a Test Bulb:** If you're unsure whether your garlic is ready to harvest, you can carefully dig up one bulb without disturbing the others. If the cloves fill out the skins and aren't too small, then the garlic is usually ready to harvest.

Softneck vs Hardneck:

- **Softneck garlic** is typically ready to harvest a bit earlier than hardneck varieties. They are generally harvested when the lower leaves begin to yellow and get soft, but several green leaves remain.
- **Hardneck garlic** varieties produce a flowering stalk called a scape. Harvest generally comes a few weeks after the scapes start to curl or can be initiated once a number of the lower leaves have yellowed.

Steps for Harvest:

- **Loosen Soil:** Use a spading fork or similar tool to carefully loosen the soil around the garlic bulb.
- **Pull Bulbs:** Gently pull the bulbs out of the ground. Try not to bruise them, as this can affect storage life.
- **Dry and Cure:** Lay the harvested bulbs in a warm, dry location out of direct sunlight for about 2-3 weeks to allow them to cure. You can then trim the roots and stems and store them in a cool, dry place.

Note on Timing:

- For most places in the U.S., garlic is often ready to harvest between late May and July, depending on the local climate and when the garlic was planted.
- In terms of USDA zones, garlic grows well in zones 3-9, but the hardiness zone doesn't provide a reliable indicator for when to harvest garlic.

Remember that local conditions, like soil quality and weather patterns, can affect when garlic should be harvested, so these are general guidelines. Always consider observing the specific signs from your garlic plants for the best results.