



# J&L Garden Center

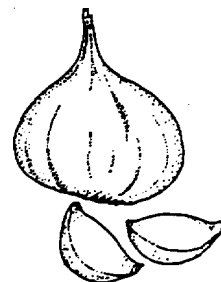
The All Season Gift  
and Garden Center

620 North 500 West Bountiful, Utah 292-0421

[www.JLGardenCenter.com](http://www.JLGardenCenter.com)

## Growing & Harvesting Garlic

Garlic grown in your own garden and properly stored has a fresh pungency quite unlike the musty odor and bitter flavor too often present in cloves that have been sitting on a grocery shelf. Fortunately for those who enjoy cooking with it, this bulbous herb is easy to grow and requires very little space in the garden. The secret to a harvest of large garlic bulbs is **fall planting** -- generally four to six weeks before the soil freezes. This way the roots can become established before winter sets in and will be ready to support the vigorous leafy growth early next spring. Fall planting also makes for larger plants and therefore larger bulbs at harvest time. The plants will begin to produce bulbs once the long days of June arrive.



### Steps for planting.

#### 1. Prepare the planting bed.

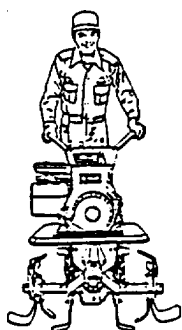
Always rotate your garden. It's not wise to plant garlic in the same spot used for garlic, or other plants in the onion family, year after year. Rotating crops helps prevent the buildup of disease organisms in the soil.

Garlic requires a reasonably fertile, well-drained soil. Avoid planting in areas where water can collect around the roots, causing them to rot or become diseased.

Planting garlic in a raised bed works well. A raised bed lined with chicken wire will also exclude gophers, which are fond of garlic. Work several inches of **soil pep** compost or **well-rotted manure** into the bed, plus a complete fertilizer such as **16-16-8 multi-purpose fertilizer**. Then smooth the soil

with a rake.

**2. Plant and mulch.** The best time to plant garlic is in the fall, six to eight weeks before the ground freezes. Planting at this time gives the garlic time to root before it freezes. If you don't plant in the fall, plant as early in the spring as the ground is workable. Garlic planted in the spring will usually not grow as large as that planted in the fall. Garlic repro-



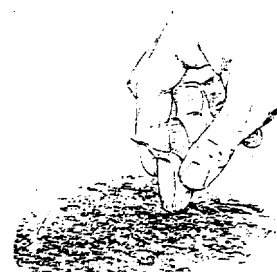
duces vegetatively -- that is, it grows from individual cloves broken off from a whole bulb. Each clove multiplies in the ground, forming a new bulb that consists of 10 to 20 cloves.

Break a bulb apart into individual cloves, keeping only the largest, firmest ones for planting. Space the cloves four to six inches apart and allow about twelve inches between rows. Be sure to set the cloves in the ground with the pointed end up and the flat, basal plate down. Push each clove an inch or so into the ground, firm the soil around it, and water the bed.

After planting, cover your garden with a protective mulch of soil pep, chopped leaves, straw, or grass clippings. The mulch should be four to six inches thick to prevent the roots from being heaved out of the soil by alternate freezing and thawing. Don't worry of a few garlic leaves sprout; most of the plant's above ground growth will occur next spring.

**3. Spring Care.** When the leaves begin to grow next spring, fertilize the plants again, to encourage growth. Apply a high-nitrogen fertilizer that decomposes slowly, such as blood meal or Osmocote, gently working a teaspoon or two into the soil near each plant.

If the mulch has decomposed, apply another layer to reduce weeds and to help retain moisture. Pull any weeds that do appear, or they will rob the mois-



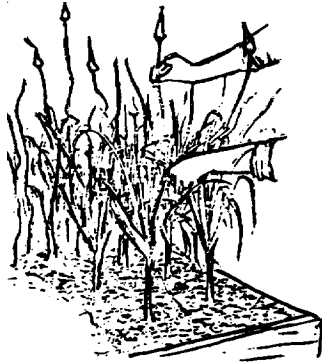
ture and nutrients from the garlic. Be sure to keep the garlic patch uniformly watered especially during dry spells.

Sometimes during the spring garlic plants will send up flower stalks that will eventually produce small bulbs. Cut these stalks off as soon as you see them (you can add them to salads and vegetable dishes if you wish) to help direct the plant's energy into forming a large bulb in the soil.



As summer approaches, garlic plants stop producing new leaves and begin to form bulbs. Remove any remaining mulch and stop watering. Allowing the soil to dry out around the maturing bulbs will help the garlic store better.

**4. Harvest and Storage.** When most of the leaves have turned brown (mid-July to early-August), gently pull or dig up the bulbs, being careful not to bruise them. Don't leave them in the ground too long, or they may begin to separate and will not store well.



Lay the plants, leaves and all, out to dry for two or three days in a shady spot with good air circulation. Be sure to protect them from the rain or sprinklers. When the roots feel dry and brittle, rub them off, along with any loose dirt. Don't wash the bulbs or break them apart, or the plants won't store as long.



Either braid the garlic, tie it in bunches, or cut off the stems a few inches above the bulbs. Hang the braids, or store the loose bulbs on slatted shelves or screens in an airy, cool (but not freezing) location. Set aside the largest bulbs to replant later in the fall. During winter storage check your bulbs often, and promptly use any bulbs that show signs of sprouting.

## Elephant Garlic

Elephant garlic is planted and grown the same way regular garlic is grown. Elephant garlic usually grows much larger than the common garlic, up to eight times larger. Elephant garlic usually has a little milder

flavor than regular garlic, however, the flavor of garlic is influenced by heat, water stress (too much or too little) and by soil fertility. To grow the best quality of garlic (common or elephant garlic) in your garden - **fertilize well before you plant, water consistently, and plant garlic in the fall.**

