



GROWING *edibles* IN PERTH

How to Grow Garlic from Bulbs

The distinctive aroma that is released when a clove of garlic is crushed is unmistakable. Garlic is a highly prized health food that has been grown for thousands of years for its culinary and medicinal properties. It is easy to grow and has many different uses and benefits. It is a very versatile ingredient, excellent for flavouring many types of dishes. The cloves can be used raw or cooked. It is valued for its antibacterial and antiviral properties and is known to boost the immune system. It is used to relieve colds and flu, moderate cholesterol, and blood pressure, plus it is high in antioxidants.

Garlic can be planted in autumn and is ready for harvest in late spring to summer. The biggest bulbs are formed when the cloves are planted early in autumn, however planting too early can cause the bulbs to rot. Garlic is ready to plant when a shoot develops in the centre of the clove. Slice open a clove to check if the shoot has started.

Select a full sun position with improved soil that is free draining. Add well-rotted manure a few weeks before planting. If the soil pH is neutral or low, adding lime can be beneficial. As the cloves are in the ground over autumn and winter when the soil can be quite damp, there must be very good drainage so they don't rot before they have a chance to shoot.

Garlic will grow well in containers, but it will take a long time for the crop to develop so it needs to be carefully managed when grown in pots.

When a suitable location has been chosen and the soil properly prepared, separate the cloves and plant individually approximately 8-10 cm apart, pointy end up. Rows should be 60cm apart to produce an abundant crop of about 5 bulbs per m².

Correct watering and fertilizing are important. The soil needs to stay moist for the first few weeks after planting. After this, consistent autumn and winter rains should be enough to sustain the plant growth. Once the warmer weather returns, water regularly during the growing season, especially in spring. Fertilise with a balanced organic fertiliser at regular intervals to ensure the plant has enough food to grow strongly. Applications of a seaweed solution once a month will help develop the bulb.

Garlic needs the transition from short cool days in winter to long warmer days in summer to set a good sized bulb. In warmer, sub-tropical areas, the plant may produce lots of green top growth and very small bulbs.

Cease watering a few weeks prior to harvest to ensure the plants become dry and firm before lifting. Once foliage has wilted at the base and dies back, lift and hang in a cool, dry and dark environment with good ventilation. The bulbs will harden and the leaves will have dried off after about 6 months and be ready for use.

This is intended as general information only. Please ask one of our horticulturists for specific advice for your situation.