



GROWING GARLIC IN CANBERRA

What a treat..... fresh, flavour-packed garlic from your own garden or pot! And the good news is that the Canberra area has a great climate for easy-to-grow garlic.

WHAT DO I NEED?

- A sunny spot
- Good drainage - no wet feet
- Well prepared soil or a good quality potting mix
- Good quality garlic bulbs to start with! (Imported bulbs from the supermarket will disappoint)

HOW DO I GROW GARLIC?

- Prepare the planting bed in advance with well rotted cow manure, compost and a complete plant food - we recommend *Healthy Earth* fertilisers. Aim for a light fluffy soil; or you can mound the soil if it is too heavy and less well drained. Canberra soils will usually need some garden lime added too, and you might need Claybreaker to deal with heavy soils.
- If you don't have space for a bed, tuck them in between other plants or try growing them in a large pot (go for a deep one 30-40cms wide). It's best to grow garlic in a new location each year over a 3-year cycle, to prevent disease build-up.
- Plant garlic in early autumn for harvesting in early summer. You can plant earlier if you need to, but make sure the soil does not get too wet and cause rot. It is possible to plant as late as spring, but the results will not be so good. You can plant garlic as late as when cloves begin to shoot.
- Break the bulb up into separate cloves and plant them with the pointy end up, at roughly 10cm spacing and at a depth of 3-5 cms (the tips will be just below the soil surface) - and rows about 30-40cms apart, to allow access for weeding. Water in well but not again until shoots appear.
- Mulch generously (garlic does not like weed competition). Water regularly during the growing season and fertilise regularly with *Healthy Earth*.
- Aphids can be a pest - just squash with fingers or use one of the many spray alternatives available from us.

HARVESTING YOUR GARLIC

- Stop watering when the tops of the plants start to brown and the stems start to soften, around early December (about 8-9 months later). Then harvest promptly or else the cloves in the new bulb can start to separate.
- Dig up carefully with a garden fork - no bruising! Allow to dry in a dry shady place for 2-3 weeks (hang them or spread on an airy rack). Then either plait and hang them, or store them loose with leaves and roots removed, in a dry airy place. In good conditions bulbs can be stored for up to 8 or 9 months - if you can resist!

VARIETIES

Have fun with the many varieties available to see which flavour you like best. They come in white, red and purple skin types, with flavours ranging from mild to strong. Look out for the unusual Elephant Garlic, a large growing bulb of very mild flavour.

To help stretch out the garlic joy in your household, you can even try a mix of early or late varieties!