

# Planting Garlic (*Allium sativum*) Cloves in the Autumn

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Garlic is one of the easiest vegetables to grow and takes just a few simple steps.

As with onions, it prefers a sunny site in soil that has not been freshly manured.

Planting a few cloves at the end of an onion bed is a good idea as they move around the beds using the same crop rotation.

Garlic doesn't like heavy or badly drained soil or it may rot. If you've got heavy soil you could try planting cloves into individual modules in the autumn, that can be transplanted into the soil in the Spring. Alternatively, plant cloves into large containers.



Garlic Arno bulb saved from summer crop



*18 cloves split from 1 bulb should give us 18 new bulbs*

Garlic takes a long time to grow and most types need cool temperatures of about 0-10oC (32oF-50oF) for a month or so to fully mature. If you plant it in the autumn you can expect to harvest it around mid-summer. (You'll know it's ready when the leaves turn yellow).

It's important to buy bulbs from reputable suppliers as they're likely to have been certified disease free. If you do this you can pretty much guarantee they will grow well for you and you can plant next crops from saved bulbs.



I bought a pack of three bulbs, the variety 'Arno', about three years ago and have been re-using cloves from these each season since. They have lovely fat, juicy, strong tasting cloves as some of the workshop participants can testify! If you haven't grown garlic before, bulbs are available in the autumn from garden centres or online for between €3 to €4, depending upon your supplier.



The individual cloves are planted a bit deeper than onions - up to to 10cm (4in) deep in sandy soils, or 2.5in (1in) in heavier. They can be spaced around 18cm (7in) apart each way and it's important they're planted the correct way up. As with the onion sets, I lay them all out on the top of the soil before planting them (so I know where they all are & to give me a second chance of getting them the right way up!). If your soil is in anyway heavy use a dibber to make the hole rather than pushing the clove in - it's easy to damage if roughly treated.

Once in the ground garlic doesn't need much looking after other than weeding. When the leaves have turned colour, use a fork to loosen and dig up the bulbs and leave them to dry for a couple of weeks, preferably outside if it's sunny, or inside in an airy place if not. Once the bulbs are fully dry they can be plaited or stored in a frost free, dry place. Depending upon the variety grown, they will keep for up to a year.

