

How to Plant Fall Hardneck Garlic for Summer Bulbs

Learn how to select seed garlic, space cloves at the right depth in fall, mulch for winter, and care for plants in spring. Written for backyard vegetable gardeners preparing autumn beds for a summer garlic harvest.

Source Article: <https://plantogrove.com/garden/how-to-plant-fall-hardneck-garlic>

MATERIALS & SUPPLIES

- ☐ **Bulb Planting Dibbers:** Makes quick, uniform 3-inch planting holes spaced across raised beds.

STEP-BY-STEP CHECKLIST

- ☐ **1. Choose Disease-Free Seed Garlic Suited to Your Winter Climate**
Select cold-hardy hardneck varieties for cold-winter regions, or softneck varieties for mild-winter climates. Avoid planting grocery-store garlic, which may carry soil diseases or be treated to prevent sprouting.
Why this matters: Clean seed stock prevents introducing long-lasting allium diseases into your vegetable beds.
- ☐ **2. Separate Bulbs into Individual Cloves on Planting Day**
Pop the heads apart into single cloves right before planting, leaving the papery skin intact on each clove. Set aside the biggest outer cloves for planting and use the smallest cloves in the kitchen.
Why this matters: Cloves dry out and lose vigor if cracked apart weeks ahead of planting.
- ☐ **3. Plant Cloves Pointed Tip Up, 2 to 3 Inches Deep and 6 Inches Apart**
Loosen your garden bed and mix in finished compost. Push each clove into the soil with the flat root plate facing down and the pointed tip facing up, covered with 2 to 3 inches of soil and spaced 6 inches apart.
Why this matters: Garlic has a shallow root system that needs loose soil and 6 inches of space to form full-sized bulbs.
- ☐ **4. Cover the Bed with 4 to 6 Inches of Straw or Shredded Leaves**
Water the planted bed well, then spread a 4-to-6-inch layer of clean wheat straw or shredded fall leaves over the soil.
Why this matters: Mulch cushions the soil against winter freeze-thaw heaving and keeps spring weeds down.
- ☐ **5. Feed in Early Spring and Snip Curled Scapes in Early Summer**
Side-dress emerging green shoots with a nitrogen-rich organic fertilizer in early spring, stop fertilizing once bulbs start swelling in late spring, and snap off curling hardneck flower stalks (scapes) once they form a loop.
Why this matters: Removing the flowering scape directs the plant's energy into sizing up the underground bulb.

PLANTOGROVE - PRINTABLE CHECKLIST & GROWING PLANNER

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IMPORTANT REMINDERS & SEASONAL TIMING

- ! Avoid: Stop nitrogen fertilizer at least 4 to 6 weeks before harvest so bulbs tighten up and cure properly.
- ! Avoid: Cure harvested garlic in a shaded, airy spot-direct hot summer sun can cook the cloves inside their wrappers.
- * Cold & Moderate Winter Regions: Plant in mid-to-late autumn (roughly 2 to 4 weeks after the first fall frost, before the soil freezes).
- * Mild-Winter Southern & Coastal Regions: Plant softneck varieties in late fall, or chill hardneck seed bulbs in a paper bag in the refrigerator (around 40 deg F, away from apples) for 6 weeks before planting.

GROWING PLANNER & CARE NOTES

Date Started: _____ Pot / Bed Location: _____ Target Check Date: _____

Observations, Watering Log & Seasonal Notes: