

Garlic Planting-to-Harvest Calendar & Checklist

Fall-planted garlic usually takes ~8-9 months in temperate US gardens, guided by winter chill, spring day length, and leaf cues.

1. SEASONAL TIMELINE CHECKLIST & LOCAL TARGET DATES

- ☐ **Stage 1: Fall Pre-Planting Check (Local date: _____)**
Select adapted hardneck or softneck seed garlic; pop apart firm outer cloves 24-48 hrs before planting; keep papery skins intact.
- ☐ **Stage 2: Fall Planting & Winter Mulch (Local date: _____)**
Plant after summer soil heat fades (or 1-2 wks after first frost / 3-6 wks before hard freeze); cover with 3-4 in. straw or shredded leaves.
- ☐ **Stage 3: Spring Leaf Growth & Care (Local date: _____)**
Keep beds weeded early; water ~1 in./wk during active leaf growth; finish nitrogen feeding in early spring before bulbing starts.
- ☐ **Stage 4: Late-Spring Scape & Bulb Swelling (Local date: _____)**
Clip or snap curling hardneck scapes just above top leaf; stop supplemental nitrogen as lengthening daylight swells bulbs.
- ☐ **Stage 5: Summer Harvest & Curing Window (Local date: _____)**
Stop watering 1-2 wks before harvest; dig when lower 1/3 to 1/2 of leaves brown while upper 1/2 to 2/3 remain green.

2. PLANTING DEPTH, SPACING & HARDNECK VS. SOFTNECK QUICK REFERENCE

Reference Item	Orientation, Climate Fit & Clove Structure	Spacing, Scape & Storage Notes
Depth & Spacing	Pointed tip UP, flat root plate DOWN; ~2-3 in. deep (1-2 in. mild)	Space cloves ~6 in. apart (4-6 in.) in rows 12-18 in. apart in well-drained soil
Hardneck Garlic	Best for cold northern winters; single ring of larger cloves around	Produces curling edible scape in late spring; moderate storage (~3-6 months)
Softneck Garlic	Best for mild winters (or mulched moderate zones); multi-layered	Pliable neck for braiding; rarely forms scapes; longest storage (~6-9+ months)

3. SPRING CARE, HARVEST-READINESS INSPECTION & CURING CHECKLIST

- ☐ **Spring Care Cutoff:** Stop nitrogen fertilizer before bulb swelling begins; remove curling hardneck scapes in late spring.
- ☐ **Foliage Cue:** Roughly 1/3 to 1/2 of lower leaves are yellow/brown while upper 1/2 to 2/3 remain green (do not wait until all brown).
- ☐ **Test-Bulb Check:** Dig 1-2 test bulbs first to verify cloves fill out skin plumply and papery outer wrappers are intact.
- ☐ **Careful Lifting:** Stop watering 1-2 weeks prior; loosen soil and lift from below with a garden fork-never pull stalks by hand.
- ☐ **Dry Shade Curing:** Brush off dry soil gently (never wash with water); hang or lay single-layer in shaded, dry, ventilated area.
- ☐ **Trimming & Storage:** Cure 2-4+ weeks until wrappers are papery and center stem cuts dry; trim roots to 1/4-1/2 in. & stems to 1-2 in.
- ☐ **Storage Conditions:** Store in cool, dark, airy spot (approx. 55-60 F, moderate humidity)-never in a refrigerator or sealed plastic bag.

4. GARDEN BED RECORD LOG (WRITE-IN FIELDS)

Planting date & Cultivar:	Planting date: _____ Cultivar (Hardneck / Softneck): _____
Location / Bed & Spacing:	Location/Bed: _____ Depth / Spacing / Mulch depth: _____
First growth & Scape date:	First growth date: _____ Scape removal date: _____ Spring feed cutoff: _____
Harvest date & Notes:	Harvest date: _____ Notes (wrapper quality / curing / storage): _____

5. VERIFIED COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SOURCES (NO AFFILIATE LINKS)

UMN Extension - Growing garlic in home gardens: <https://extension.umn.edu/garden-and-home/yard-and-garden/gardening-in-minnesota/growing-garlic>

UMD Extension - Growing Garlic in a Home Garden: <https://extension.umd.edu/resource/growing-garlic-home-garden>

Rutgers Extension - Growing Garlic in the Home Garden (FS1233): <https://extension.rutgers.edu/fs1233>

UGA Extension - Garlic Production for the Gardener (C854): <https://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=C854&title=garlic-production-for-the-gardener>

UConn Extension - Garlic Cultivation in Connecticut: <https://extension.uconn.edu/publication/garlic-cultivation-in-connecticut/>