

Growing Your Own

A beginner's guide to gardening

Garlic

Garlic is a flavorful garden vegetable used in countless recipes. In Kentucky, plant garlic in October and early November. Leave it in the garden for the winter, then harvest in early to mid-summer when leaves begin to turn yellow and brown at the tips.

Types

Garlic is most often grouped into hardneck and softneck types. Hardneck garlic also grows edible flower stalks called scapes with bulbils at the top. Bulbils are tiny garlic bulbs inside the flower head.

Varieties

Hardneck varieties are more cold hardy than softneck, but both perform well in Kentucky. Softneck varieties often store much longer than hardneck. Try these varieties, but others may also do well.

- **Music** (hardneck) is a very popular garlic with classic garlic flavor. It also stores well.
- **Bogatyr** (hardneck) forms smaller bulbs with outer skin that is purple striped.
- **Polish** (softneck) produces very large bulbs with white skin. It offers good storage and strong flavor.
- **Inchelium Red** (softneck) produces large bulbs with mild flavor that are excellent for storage.



Music garlic
Johnny's Selected Seeds



Garlic scapes
Jann Knappage, University of Kentucky



Garlic in the garden
Jann Knappage, University of Kentucky



Garlic bulbils
Ashley Adamant

How much to plant

A five-foot row should yield eight to 12 heads (bulbs) of garlic.

How and when to plant

Plant garlic in an open, sunny spot with well-drained soil. In Kentucky, garlic is planted in the fall, mostly in October through early November.

Garlic grows best with added nutrients. Starting in spring, add a slow-release fertilizer or compost, or use a water-soluble fertilizer according to the product label.

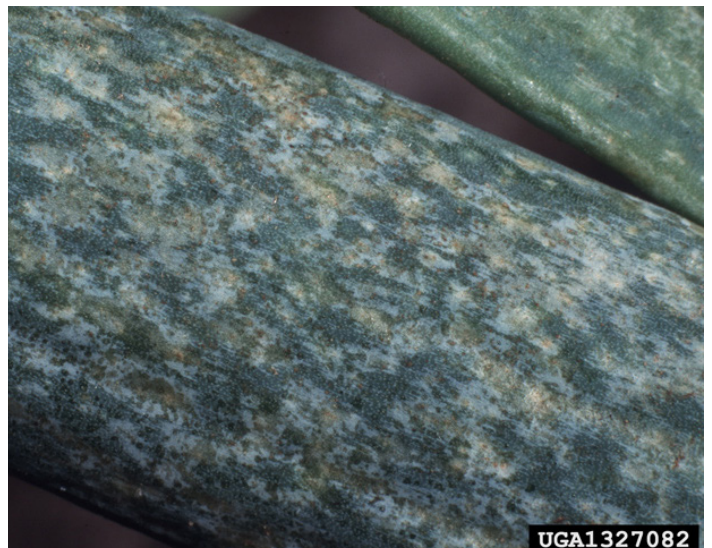


A clove of garlic, at right, separated from the head or bulb
Jann Knappage, University of Kentucky

Garlic Planting		
Rows: 12 to 18 inches apart	Spacing: 6 inches apart	Depth: 1 to 2 inches
Safe Planting Dates		
Region	Earliest	Latest
Eastern Kentucky	Oct. 1	Nov. 1
Central Kentucky	Oct. 1	Nov. 7
Western Kentucky	Oct. 1	Nov. 15

Pests and disease

If you see tiny, speckled holes or twisted leaves, you may have thrips. Onion maggots can also affect garlic bulbs if you grow onions or garlic in the same location for many years. Please see UK Cooperative Extension publication *Home Vegetable Gardening in Kentucky* (ID-128) at <http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agcomm/pubs/ID/ID128/ID128.pdf> or contact your Extension agent for tips to control pests.



Close-up of thrips feeding damage on leaf
Alton N. Sparks, Jr., University of Georgia, Bugwood.org, CC BY 3.0

Harvesting

In addition to garlic bulbs, you can also eat garlic leaves, scapes, and bulbils, which all have a garlic taste. You can harvest these while the plant is growing, and you can use them like garlic cloves. Be sure to harvest only some leaves in order for the plant to still grow and produce big garlic bulbs.

Bulbs start to mature in late June to mid-July the year after you plant them. When several leaves begin to yellow and tips turn brown, garlic bulbs are ready to harvest. With care, loosen the soil around the bulbs. Gently pull the stalk to remove the bulb from the ground. Shake off excess soil and place in a shaded area to cure (dry) for about two weeks. Once dry, you can braid the tops together or tie them for storage, or you can remove the tops. Keep some bulbs to plant for next year's crop.



Harvesting garlic

Jann Knappage, University of Kentucky



Onion thrips and damage

Ric Bessin, University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension



Garlic stacked to dry

Jann Knappage, University of Kentucky



Garlic bulb

Jann Knappage, University of Kentucky

Storing

Store garlic in a cool spot with good airflow. Put garlic in mesh bags, wooden crates with slatted sides, or other storage that gives good airflow. You can hang braided garlic to store. Well-dried garlic should keep for six to seven months.

Serving

People in many cultures have treasured garlic for its strong flavor and smell. Garlic has chemicals that may help fight long-term health issues like cancer, heart disease, and diabetes. Almost every cuisine around the world uses garlic.

You can eat garlic raw or cooked. You can roast or grill whole heads of garlic. And you can pickle garlic cloves or infuse them into oil. Garlic powder is used for cooking and in health supplements. You can also find garlic in soups, salad dressings, and sauces.

To use garlic cloves, divide the cloves and remove the papery skin from each one. Five seconds in the microwave will make the skin easy to remove. Cut off the hard root end. Cut, crush, use a garlic press or use whole cloves.

To use garlic greens or scapes, wash and cut. They can be eaten raw or cooked.

Clean up

Pull out any leftover plants. Compost healthy plant material. Throw away any diseased plants.



Garlic hung for storage

Jann Knappage, University of Kentucky



Head of garlic cloves

Erika Olsen, University of Kentucky

Summary

Varieties

There are two types of garlic: hardneck and softneck. Both grow well in Kentucky. Music and Bogatyr are two recommended types. Softneck types store longer.

How much to plant?

A five-foot row should grow eight to 12 heads of garlic.

How and when to plant?

In Kentucky, plant garlic from October to early November and harvest the next summer. Plant cloves of garlic in well-drained, sunny soil. Space six inches apart and plant one to two inches deep.

Pests and diseases

Watch for thrips.

Harvesting

You can harvest garlic greens and scapes (flower stalks) regularly. Garlic bulbs are ready to harvest when the leaves yellow and tips turn brown. With care, remove bulbs from the soil. Place in a shaded area to dry for about two weeks. Once dry, braid or tie tops together for storage, or remove tops for storage. Keep some bulbs to plant next season.

Storing

Hang garlic in small bunches or store flat. Keep in a cool, dark, dry place. Dry garlic should keep for six to seven months.

Serving

Eat garlic cloves and greens raw or cooked. They are used in many recipes.

Clean up

The crop is harvested completely in summer. Little clean up is needed after harvest.

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Disabilities
accommodated
with prior notification.