



By Brian Sams

E-mail: briansams@live.com.au
www.wattletreehorticulture.com.au

Garlic Culture - Fact Sheet

The following article was prepared with material supplied by Budgee Garlic and Herbs – a great local enterprise producing organic herbs and spices for the local market. Visit their website here <http://www.budgeegarlicandherbs.com/about>

Growing Garlic

Garlic likes full sun but can tolerate part shade. In really hot climates, such as gardens further west garlic will benefit from being in afternoon shade. Although garlic can be planted any time of the year, it is best planted autumn and harvested in spring. Growing through winter helps to stimulate the production of cloves that will fill out in spring to produce a good size bulb.

Garlic loves a rich fertile loam or a silty loam soil so it is a good idea to improve the soil by digging through a little aged manure and/or compost. This is particularly important if you have clay soil. The pH of the soil should be between 6 and 7.

You can also apply a small amount of blood and bone or dynamic lifter to your soil if you wish and liquid fertilise with soluble fertiliser 2 or 3 times in the crop cycle. Budgee Garlic also recommend an application of seaweed.

It is important to keep the crop well weeded as weeds can reduce garlic size quite considerably.



Garlic that is water stressed in its early growing period can 'cancel' the side buds that were about to grow into cloves, and will produce a single fat, low quality clove instead. Cold winters reduces the likelihood of this happening, so it is chiefly a problem for warm areas. Therefore, although garlic doesn't like constantly wet or soggy soil, you should apply some water once a week, particularly if there is a dry spell.

Harvest your garlic in spring when the plants turn 50 – 70% yellowy brown. Bulbs should be plump and full by then, don't wait until the tops have completely died back as the number of green leaves indicate the number of intact sheaths left covering the bulb. Treat the bulbs gently as bruised bulbs do not store well. Use a garden fork to lift them.

After harvest remove excess soil from roots but leave them intact, garlic can be dried on racks or hangers in an airy place away from direct sun for 4 to 6 weeks. Good air circulation is essential during this time. Proper drying is essential for garlic to store well. When you separate your garlic bulbs for use in the kitchen, put aside the biggest, plumpest cloves to be planted our next autumn. Store dried garlic in a cool, dry place. Do Not store in the fridge or it will think winter is approaching and start to shoot early.



Variety information supplied by Green Harvest. Green Harvest are a wonderful Queensland Based organic garden company that are able to supply a wide range of products including the varieties listed below.

Visit their website at <http://greenharvest.com.au/index.htm>

Best varieties for Queensland

'Australian White' is a soft-neck, non-bolting type with a white skin and occasional purple marks. It is a medium to large bulb. It requires a cold temperate climate with cold winters, a warm spring and a hot dry summer. Suitable for Victoria and southern NSW and cooler, inland areas further north.

'Glenlarge' is a soft-neck type with a purple skin, selected by Gatton Research Station as being suitable for Australian conditions, from the Atherton Tableland to SA. It is a top-setting, early, day-length neutral garlic, which makes it far more suitable for warmer areas, than other garlic cultivars.

'Italian White' has a creamy white skin, and forms a medium to large bulb with up to 17 cloves per bulb. It is a softneck garlic which does not produce a flower stem. Do not plant the small, inner bulbs of softneck garlic as they are unlikely to do well. When the garlic bulb is mature the leaves begin to die back.

'Monaro Purple' is a hardneck or top-setting variety which usually produces a flower stem in early summer. It is mainly suitable for cooler areas. It is also called a 'rocambole' variety from the habit the flower stem has of looping over on itself to produce a distinctive twist. Rocambole types have a sweet, nutty flavour with 6-8 cloves per bulb. They are ready to harvest when the coil twist in the flower stem begins to straighten and the flower stem begins to soften.

'Red Rocambole' syn. Creole 'Rojo de Castro' is a hardneck or top-setting garlic variety which usually produces a flower stem in early summer. Worth buying just for cooking, this organic garlic is a powerhouse of flavour, definitely one for the gourmet. The silvery white bulbs are smaller than some types but the cloves are a good size with a beautiful and distinctive crimson skin. This garlic has recently been relabelled as a Creole type which makes it suitable for a range of growing areas.

