



Planting Garlic: 2 harvests in one

Garlic is a crop that has 2 harvests. Anywhere from late June to mid-July the plant will send up a curling stem that is called a garlic scape, this is edible. Once the scape is removed you can look forward to a garlic harvest in around a month. Two harvests for the effort of one. It's an easy crop that yields results in less than a year. Fall is the time to plant this wonderful crop.

Soil Preparation: Garlic will tolerate some shade but prefers full sun. Garlic does best in well-drained, rich, loamy soil amended with lots of organic matter. Raised beds are ideal, except in very dry regions. It does not like being wet and soggy over the winter. If your beds tend to be wet during the winter and early spring, hill your rows to improve drainage. Make sure to rotate your garlic beds every year, don't reuse the same bed for at least 4 years, including where you have planted onions and leeks. (this reduces insect and disease problems)

Leek Moth Protection: Leek moth is an invasive insect that is becoming more prevalent in New Brunswick each year. Clean up your old garlic bed in the fall by removing any plant material, if it is infected with insects, do not compost but discard. Rotate your crops carefully, remember to include all alliums (members of the onion/ garlic/ shallot family). Plan to use row covers to protect your crop, starting early in the season. (see leek moth information sheet for details)

Planting: Traditionally garlic is planted between the 2 fall holidays (Thanksgiving and Remembrance Day). With climate affecting our fall weather, make sure to plant late enough in the season that the weather and the ground are cooling off. Obtain your garlic to plant from garden centers in the fall, you need the correct type of garlic. Farmer's markets that sell locally grown garlic also are a good source of planting garlic. After the first harvest, save your best garlic for replanting in the fall. Each clove (the sections of the bulb) will produce a new bulb, and the largest cloves generally yield the biggest bulbs. *(Optional: To get the cloves off to a strong start and protect them from fungal diseases, you can soak them in a jar of water containing a heaping tablespoon of baking soda and a tablespoon of liquid seaweed for a few hours before planting)*

Spacing: Place cloves with the flat or root-end down and pointed-end up, with each tip 2 inches beneath the soil. Set the cloves about 5-6 inches apart in a grid, push them into the soil. If the soil is very dry, water after planting, but otherwise just add mulch.

Mulching: After planting, protect the area with mulch such as straw or dried leaves. Remove the mulch in early spring. When the soil warms up, re-cover the garlic bed with mulch. Mulch conserves moisture and suppresses weeds (garlic competes poorly with weeds).

Watering: Garlic needs about an inch of water each week during spring growth. With adequate mulch you rarely need to water garlic in New Brunswick. However, with the changing climate be sure to water during dry periods.

Scape Sacrifice: By early summer, your garlic will send up a flower stalk that curls as they mature. These savory stalks, known as scapes, should be removed once they curl to encourage larger, more efficient bulb growth. They are edible with a mild garlic flavor. If the scape is left on the plant, it will flower and produce something that looks like baby garlic cloves. Ideally you should remove the stem once it has one or 2 curls, it snaps off easily just above the leaves. Doing this will let the plant energy go to making a bigger garlic bulb rather than producing seed. The scape can be used any way that garlic can, it is edible including the flower tip. They can be sautéed, roasted, pickled, the sky is the limit with this versatile first crop of the garlic plant

Fertilizing: It is not necessary to fertilize your garlic with a good fertile garden bed, side dressing with compost during early spring is always a good idea. Foliar feeding (spraying your plant with diluted liquid organic fertilizer) is an option to care for your garlic.

Harvesting Hints When half to three-quarters of the leaves turn yellow-brown, typically in late July early August it's harvest time. Carefully dig up each bulb; do not pull, or you may break the stalk from the bulb, which can cause it to rot. If they are left in the ground too long after the die back of the leaves, the outer layer of the bulb will rot leaving unprotected cloves. Leave harvested bulbs in the sun for a few hours to dry the outer layers. Tie the garlic together in bundles of 6 to 10 bulbs (label them if you've grown more than one variety) and hang them to cure for about several weeks in a shaded, dry area with good airflow. Alternatively you can just lay them flat on a surface in a single layer. When your garlic is thoroughly dry, trim the roots, taking care not to knock off the outer skin. Cut off the stalks about 1½ inches above the bulb if you plan to keep the garlic in bags. Recycled mesh onion bags are perfect for storage. Do not store in the fridge or a closed container. They should keep well the whole winter.

Saving for the next planting season Save the best bulbs to replant in the Fall. No cross-pollination happens with garlic. The cloves will produce bulbs just like the ones from which they came. Some sources recommend refreshing your garlic after several years by taking the seeds from the scape and planting them. These will form a single clove the first year (a round), and usually take 3 seasons to get a full sized garlic bulb. Most people find this is not necessary.

Companions: Can be planted with most vegetables, except for beans and peas

Soaking if you are worried your garlic may be host to insects or disease, you can soak or spray them well with rubbing alcohol or hydrogen peroxide. Your best bet is to only plant cloves that are free from signs of insect damage or mold.

Varieties: Soft Neck garlic has no hard stalk and is easy to braid. Most NB garlic is a hard neck variety. There are many different types of hard neck varieties, with different qualities depending on your tastes.



Garlic Scapes

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