

Planting Garlic in the Fall

Doreen T.

Master Gardener of Hunterdon

In New Jersey, garlic can be planted in the fall or spring.

In Autumn, plant three to four weeks before the first killing frost, generally mid-October to late November. Rutgers

recommends acquiring named varieties that are disease-free and suited to grow in this region. Select healthy, firm, unblemished cloves. Prepare the planting bed by mixing in organic matter. Garlic loves nitrogen and a soil pH between 6.5 and 7.0.

Break the garlic bulbs apart a few days before planting. In a sunny or partially shaded location, with good-draining soil, plant the cloves points up so the root is down. To insulate them from winter conditions, cover with three to four inches of mulch.

The following spring and summer, the cloves will need about one inch of rainfall per week. If they do not obtain this amount naturally, water them. Once the leaves begin to yellow in summer, stop watering. This allows the bulbs to firm up.

Garlic can be harvested in stages. A few leaves can be cut in the spring. The scapes can be cut on some varieties in June. The bulbs are ready to be carefully dug up soon after the leaves begin to turn brown in spring and summer. Harvested bulbs can be cured for future use in a cool, dry, well-shaded location with good air circulation in 4 to 6 weeks.

For more information, refer to Fact Sheet FS 1233: Growing Garlic in the Home Garden (RUTGERS NJAES) <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/fs1233/>

