



Project List: Garlic & Shallots

Garlic and shallots are kitchen staples, and favorites of all home cooks. They are incredibly easy to grow in north Texas, and require little care if planted at the proper time and location in your garden.

- Compost**— A must for healthy soil, very loose, compost-rich soil is best for both of these crops. Add more compost to your garden seasonally before every planting.
- Fertilizer**— Foods made for edibles are best. Try **Espoma's Tomato-tone** or **Garden-tone**. Garlic likes additional nitrogen; try **Hasta-Gro** or **Fish Emulsion** in a foliar-sprayed application.
- Greensand**— A natural, marine-sourced potassium source that is ideal for these root crops.
- Liquid Seaweed**— An organic extract that strengthens plants for better resistance to temperature fluctuations, stress, and disease. Good as a drench or foliar spray.
- Mulch**— Light mulches such as pine needles are good to keep the necks of the crop drier.

Garlic

With its multitude of uses, everyone should be growing garlic in north Texas. It's easy to do, has few insect or disease problems, and with good cultural practices, it offers many health benefits and the amazing requisite flavor for many types of cooking!

TIMING: Garlic cloves are best planted 4-6 weeks before the ground freezes; generally the month of October.

SELECTION: Generally, there are two types: hard neck types peel easier, and are more pungent with greater flavor variations. The soft neck varieties are milder, but tend to store better, and are ideal for braiding.

SITE: Choose a site that is in full sun, 6-8 hours, or part sun for garlic to do its best. Soils should be fertile and high in organic matter, and very well drained in order to prevent rot. Garlic makes a good bed border.

PREP:

- A quick soak of the bulb in a seaweed or root stimulator solution will start them off right.
- Break each bulb into individual cloves. Any smaller cloves will produce smaller bulbs of garlic.

PLANT:

- Plant with the point-side up and root down 1 or 2 inches: 1 inch in harder soils, 2 inches in heavily cultivated ones; spacing a minimum of 4 inches apart, in 8 inch rows.
- Apply 1" of mulch, and water in well. The plants emerge in about 2 weeks, depending on temperature.

(Continued on reverse)

CULTURE:

- Keep the soil moist but not wet, and don't allow it to dry out. Do not overwater.
- Fertilize at least twice with a higher nitrogen food in winter and spring when active growth has begun. Foliar sprays can work well, such as **Hasta-Gro**. Once bulbing begins, no fertilizer will affect the plant.
- Keep the growing area weeded; heavy cultivating can damage the small roots of garlic.
- Some hardneck types may try to flower, and this is best removed as it may take up too much energy.
- Should a hard freeze be predicted, lightly cover developed plants with frost cloth.

HARVEST: Timing is important. Garlic should mature in about 7-8 months. Do not wait to harvest. If dug too early, garlic won't store well, but it cannot be stored in the ground as with onions. Wait until the green tops just begin to turn yellow and fall over with the increasingly warmer temperatures about May.

- Carefully lift with a fork, and lay in shade. Excellent air circulation is essential. *Do not wash, cut the tops or the roots.* Lightly brush off any remaining soil, and store in an airy, cool, dry place out of direct sunlight to cure for 3 weeks to 2 months, at which time the tops and roots may be removed.
- Best storage is at 45-55 degrees and 50% humidity. Keep above 40 degrees to keep the bulbs from re-sprouting.

Shallots

Shallots are planted at the same time as garlic, but separately from them since they have slightly different cultural requirements more similar to onions. With their milder, more delicate flavor, shallots are the gourmet onion so intrinsic to French cooking.

SITE: Shallots need full to part sun, with soils very loose and fertile with excellent drainage.

PLANT: Space 4-6 inches apart, in rows 18 inches wide, planting barely 1 inch deep, as those planted too deeply produce longer bulbs that do not store as well or simply rot.

CULTURE:

- Consistent soil moisture is the key to success with shallots. Watering should always taper off toward maturity; shallots mature better in much drier soils than garlic.
- It is important to pull back any mulch or soil as the bulbs begin to form on the surface.

HARVEST:

- When temperatures begin to stay warm by early to mid-May, most of the tops will have turned brown and fallen over. Shallots can then be gently loosened from their soil with care to avoid bruising.
- Do not trim the leaves, and air dry for 2-3 weeks until tops have completely shriveled, then cut. Spread the bulbs out in a very airy location to cure for 2-3 months at 45-50 degrees.