



UNH Cooperative Extension Info Line Question of the Week

Garlic

Q. I'd like to grow some garlic, and I've heard that mid-October is the traditional planting time. If so, how do I go about it?

A. Garlic is a fun and easy crop, and this is indeed the time of year to plant it. First you'll need to prepare a planting bed. Garlic prefers deep, well-drained, fertile soil that's free of perennial weeds and has a pH between 6.0 and 7.0. Locate a source of "seed garlic" from a garden center or seed catalogue, as supermarket garlic may have been treated to prevent sprouting. Separate the individual cloves and plant them 2 to 3 inches deep (pointed side up!) and 4 inches apart. Mulch the bed with 3 to 4 inches of straw or other organic materials such as pine needles, grass clippings or chopped leaves. If all goes well, each clove will produce a whole bulb. The tiny garlic shoots will pop up above the mulch in early spring. By midsummer, flower stalks (called scapes) begin to grow from the centers of the plants. Clip off the scapes to prevent them from using energy you want the plant to put into sizing up your crop (many growers chop and use the scapes in cooking). Garlic is ready to harvest when most of the foliage has turned brown-usually in mid-July. Store whole plants in a warm, dry spot with good circulation until the tops have completely dried. Then remove the stalks with kitchen or pruning shears, and store the heads in mesh bags (or an old nylon stocking leg) in a cool, dry location. Save your biggest, best-shaped, disease-free heads for next fall's seed.

Got questions? UNH Cooperative Extension Education Center's Info Line offers practical help finding answers for your lawn and garden questions. Call toll free at 1-877-398-4769, M-F, 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., or e-mail us at answers@unh.edu.