

GARLIC 101 AGENDA 2017

Time: 1 hour

Materials:

- + Appropriate Tools for Task
 - + Info on available garlic seed, locations, pricing
 - + Gloves for participants
 - + Wheelbarrows for collection
 - + Racks/ instructions for laying out garlic
- + Handouts on:
 - + Selecting, dividing, planting and mulching garlic seed
 - + Lifecycle of garlic timing the scape, pull, curing, cutting and storing

1. Introductions

- a. Name, have you grown garlic before, favorite way to enjoy garlic

2. Discussion of Garlic Health Benefits/History

- a. "Italian Perfume" This pungent herb is one of the oldest cultivated plants. It was worshiped by the Egyptians as a god and used as local currency. Clay garlic bulbs were placed in Egyptian tombs with the dearly departed. In addition, garlic was used to pay and feed workers and slaves on the great pyramids. - it was seen as a performance enhancing food for laborers and was given as a supplement to athletes in the first Olympics in Ancient Greece
- b. There is some debate over the origin of this herb. It is one of the world's oldest cultivated crops. Garlic lovers carried the pungent herb into Egypt, Pakistan, India and China. The crusaders brought back garlic to Europe. Later Spanish, French, and Portuguese settlers introduced garlic into the Americas.
- c. The name garlic comes from *garleac*, an old Anglo-Saxon word meaning "spear leek." Garlic is believed to be descended from *Allium longicuspis*, a wild strain of Asian garlic but its origins are still in question. It is from the lily (Liliaceae) family and related to onions, leeks, chives, and shallots.
- d. Garlic consumption in the United States has tripled since the 1990's, with more people discovering the delightful properties of this bulb. Worldwide there are over 2.5 million acres in garlic cultivation! That's a lot of garlic!
- e. Garlic has been used for its medicinal properties for 5,000 years - it contains a compound called allicin
- f. Allicin is what gives garlic its smell - it enters our body through our digestive tract and travels - it boosts the immune system,, reduces blood pressure, lowers cholesterol, it helps strengthen your bones and helps your body protect itself from heavy metals in our environment
- g. Copper, potassium, iron, manganese Vitamin B6 and Vitamin C

3. Meditation on age of plant before us

- a. Bring participants to the first bed of garlic, explain garlic has been growing since October 25th of 2016
- b. Ask participants to think about what has changed in their life since last October - changes they have made while this garlic has been growing. Ask some to share stories

4. Considerations for Garlic Growing

- a. Sun availability - Garlic like full sun
- b. Soil type - well drained, plenty of organic matter, no synthetic chemicals
- c. Mulching - Importance in garlic growing

- d. Scape Harvest
 - e. Space for Drying/Processing/Storage
 - f. Talk about timeframe
5. Talk about Task:
- a. Gentle Removal - important not to yank garlic up, with fork or shovel, gently loosen around bulb
 - b. Careful Transportation - garlic bulbs are still rather soft - carefully place them in wheelbarrows
 - c. Curing - garlic are laid out in a dry place with air circulation for two weeks - at the farm we use racks that allow air all around the garlic and do not let the heads/bulbs touch each other
 - d. Next Steps: In two Weeks we will snip the necks, leaving 2 -3", rub off the skin and store in netted bags, we will reserve the biggest ones for planting in 2018 at our farm and school gardens and sell the rest!

Selecting Garlic

Here are RCF, every year we calculate how many beds of garlic our farm and school gardens will need the next year. Then after we harvest our garlic bulbs we set aside the biggest and best bulbs - not for eating, but planting!

Bed Prep

Garlic likes well drained soil and needs space to grow. We weed our beds, add compost to the top and turn the compost into the soil so it can be deep in the bed, ready for our garlic.

Dividing

Your Garlic "head," or bulb, will have anywhere from 4 - 10 cloves. Break the head apart into cloves - LEAVE THE SKIN ON! This helps the little ones not to rot if your soil gets wet before they sprout.

Seeding Garlic

Some gardeners and farmers plant it closer, but we plant 48 cloves into each 4 foot by 8 foot bed. 8 rows of 6. We mark where we will put the cloves and insert them, one at a time with their pointy tip aiming for the sky and root deep in the soil, about 4".

Mulching

Because we plant as late as we can so that our garlic don't get too big before the winter comes, we plant in late October or early November, before some rain. We make sure to have plenty of leaves (you can pick them up from your neighbors driveway in the fall) and we put 3-4" of leaves on top of our newly planted beds like a blanket. The rain we planned on coming will help keep the leaves in place in the winter, though if your garlic grows too fast you can tuck them in with more leaves if they blow away!

Garlic Scapes

To make sure your garlic will be big and beautiful when you dig it up, you must cut the scapes! These are curly-cues that emerge in the early summer. Cut them off and put them in a food processor with basil, cheese and olive oil for scape pesto!

When to Harvest Garlic

When the bottom 3-4 leaves of the plant have died, it's ready to be harvested. Ideal = 3-5 days after a rain. That's because the drier the bulb is, the better it will cure and store. Lift the bulbs gently to prevent damage.

How to Cure Garlic

Lay or tie up garlic somewhere dry with good air ventilation for 2 weeks so that it completely dries out and will not rot!

Preparing Garlic for Storage

After the garlic has cured for two weeks, it's ready to store. Trim roots to 1/2 an inch long and clip off the stems just above the neck. Then store the garlic bulbs in hanging wire baskets or mesh produce bags. Air circulation is essential.

Resources:

TenAcreFarm.com

<https://www.thespruce.com/prepare-the-soil-for-growing-garlic-3016616>

<https://authoritynutrition.com/11-proven-health-benefits-of-garlic/>

http://greyduckgarlic.com/The_History_of_Garlic.html

<https://www.uaf.edu/ces/garlic/#sthash.bhPcE0St.dpbs>

<http://extension.psu.edu/business/ag-alternatives/horticulture/vegetables/garlic-production>

