



Garlic and Shallots

Garlic and shallots are a wholesome addition to our diet, good companion plants in our garden, and relatively easy crops to grow. We carry the softneck varieties of garlic, which are better suited for planting in Central Texas than the hardneck varieties. Shallots are a cousin of garlic and onions, but with a milder flavor. At maturity, shallots produce many small bulbs attached together.

Garlic and Shallots are planted in the fall here: garlic in October and November, shallots in September and October. Shallots may also be planted in late January through February. Within a month these dormant bulbs will grow leaves and a healthy bunch of roots.

After planting, garlic must have at least one month of cold winter temperatures (between 32 – 50 degrees Fahrenheit) in order to trigger bulbing. With the increasing day length in the spring, the bulbs will then form. By June the garlic will be mature.

SOIL PREPARATION: Garlic and shallots will need full sun. A well-prepared garden is needed for successful production. The soil must be soft and fluffy to allow the bulbs to expand easily. Mix in plenty of **Lady Bug Brand Revitalizer** or **Farm Style Compost**, so that the finished blend is at least 30 – 40% compost. If you are planting in clay soil, use even more compost. At the same time, mix in a good organic fertilizer, such as **Lady Bug Brand 8-2-4** or **Flower Power**.

PLANTING: Don't break apart the garlic bulb into individual cloves until just before planting, or they will lose viability. Plant the individual cloves pointy side up, 3 to 6 inches apart and 1 to 2 inches deep. Throw out any undersized cloves, since these may not mature into full-sized bulbs.

Plant shallots 6 inches apart. The shallot should only be deep enough so that the pointed tip shows just shows above the soil line.

Keep the soil evenly moist until leaves peek above ground. Water garlic at least one inch per week. Shallots prefer a drier soil than garlic. About three inches of mulch is recommended to help conserve moisture and keep out weeds.

GROWING, HARVESTING, and CURING: Fertilize again every 4 – 6 weeks.

For garlic, stop watering in late spring to allow the garlic to segment and the outer skin to dry out. The garlic is ready to harvest when the lower leaves yellow, but *before all of the leaves yellow*. Keep these bulbs in a warm, dry, and well-ventilated space to cure for 2 – 3 weeks. Check regularly to remove any parts with signs of mold. Only after curing should you remove dirt and give the roots a haircut. The stems may be trimmed back to no less than one inch, if desired, or the stems may be braided at this time. Cutting stems shorter than one inch may invite molding.

Some of the shallots leaves may be harvested and used like green onions, but realize that these shoots produce the bulbs and removing them will limit shallot bulb production. Harvest shallot bulbs anytime they are of usable size for immediate consumption. For storing shallots, however, harvest them when the leaves turn brown. Shallots are fully mature in about 100 days.

STORAGE: Store garlic and shallots away from light in a cool, well-ventilated location.

Here's to your health!