

Alliums 2023

GARLIC Note #1: Hardneck vs. Softneck		Hardneck varieties form a scape, the tall curling stalk. If the scape is left on the plant, it will produce bulbils at the top that can be used to propagate more garlic. Bulbils take several seasons to grow into big bulbs; alternatively, the leaves from growing bulbils can be used as garlic flavored scallions. Curly scapes (once they straighten they become woody and less flavorful) are delicious in recipes, so you might like to let some grow and cut off the rest, because the garlic bulbs will be smaller if you don't cut off the scapes. Softneck garlic doesn't form scapes, matures more quickly than hardneck, and stores longer.
GARLIC Note #2: Growing and Harvest		Plant garlic in the fall. Garlic is a heavy feeder-amend the soil with compost and organic fertilizer; mulch with 6-8 in. organic material through the winter. In summer, when about 75% of the leaves have turned brown, dig up the whole plant and store in a warm, airy, dark place for several weeks, to cure. After curing, trim the roots and leaves (or braid the leaves if a softneck), brush off the dirt, place the bulbs in a mesh or paper bag and store in a cool place, like a root cellar, refrigerator drawer, or basement.
GARLIC Note #3: Availability		This spring, we have Chesnok Red, Early Italian Purple, German Red, Inchelium Red, Lewis and Clark, Lorz, Korean Red, Siberian and Viola Francese garlic available, which we grew as described above, starting last October. Garlic bulbs will be available in the fall.
Chesnok Red		Hardneck. Bulbs have 8 to 12 tall, slender, easy to peel cloves; wrappers are white striped with maroon or purple. Aromatic, retains its flavor, so especially good for baking. Easy to grow, keeps well. From Shvelisi, Republic of Georgia.
Early Italian Purple		Softneck. Large bulbs (similar to garlic at the grocery) with up to 20 plump cloves; wrappers are white with light purple stripes. Easy to braid, with soft, flower-less main stalks. Excellent keeper - up to 10 months with proper curing.
German Red Garlic		Hardneck. 8-10 fat cloves per bulb, strong, spicy, rich flavor. White wrappers with purple stripes; cloves have reddish brown, easy to peel skins. Vigorous rocambole-type. Moderate storage.
Inchelium Red		Softneck. Large, dense bulbs with 12-20 cloves; easy to grow. Wrappers are white blotched with purple. Flavor becomes more robust during storage; stores very well for 6-9 months; braids well. From the Colville Indian Reservation in Inchelium, WA.
Korean Red Garlic		Hardneck. Large bulbs with 6-8 fat cloves. Wrappers are firm and tight, purple and purple striped. Harvests very early, stores 5-6 months. This is the garlic used in kim chee, very pungent and spicy.
Lewis and Clark		Hardneck. Porcelain variety. Beautiful, smallish bubs, thick, white wraps, few, but large, cloves (4-8). Flavor is mild, bulbs store very well.
Lorz		Softneck. Italian heirloom, brought to the US by the Lorz family. Artichoke type, large bulbs with 8-12 easy to peel cloves, few small interior cloves. White wrappers streaked with brown and purple; bold, hot, spicy flavor. Adapted to summer heat; stores well 6-9 months.
Siberian		Hardneck. Pink skinned, large cloves, 5-9 per bulb, purple striped bulb wrapper. Subtle garlic flavor, pungent. Stores well. Has a high allicin content, an-antimicrobial compound said to help support the body's cholesterol levels, immune system and circulation.
Viola Francese		Softneck. Artichoke type from southern France and northern Italy. Large bulbs with 6-10 cloves, purple streaked wrappers (and plant leaves!); mild flavor; stores well.

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LEEEKS		
Giant Musselburgh	80-150 days	Scottish heirloom, large with thick stems, 9-15 in. long by 2-3 in. diameter, mild flavor, stands winter well, good buncher. Open pollinated.
King Richard	75 days	Very early, fast growing summer leek (can withstand medium-heavy frost). Full-sized (12-18 in.) stems with mild flavor, upright green leaves. Plant successively for crops till Christmas; grow close together for mini leeks. Open pollinated.
Large American Flag	130 days	Standard home gardening leek. Plants have blue-green foliage, grow 10-15 in. long, with 1-1.5 in. diameter stalks. Superior quality, delicate onion flavor. Good for fall and winter harvesting. Heirloom, open pollinated.
ONION Growing Note #1: Short Day vs Long Day		Onions develop in response to the light/dark cycle. They produce top growth until daylight lasts for a certain length of time, when the onion is cued to begin bulbing. The amount of top growth prior to bulbing determines bulb size. In the South, roughly below 36° latitude, the longest summer days average 12 hours, and that is when short day onions are cued to start bulbing. In the North, the longest summer days average 16 hours, and that's when long day onions are cued to start bulbing. So if you plant a short day onion in the North, it will start bulbing before it has a lot of top growth, and the bulb will be smaller than if the onion were grown in the South. In other words, the 12 hour cue will happen earlier in the summer in the North than it would in the South, and the 16 hour cue will probably never happen in the South. So short day onions planted in the North produce smaller bulbs, and long day onions planted in the South produce lots of green top growth and no bulb at all. Intermediate and day neutral onions will grow well anywhere.
ONION Growing Note #2: Harvest and Storage		If you want to use a green or bulbing onion right away, you can harvest it whenever you want. For storage, let bulb onions mature. If a blossom appears, bend it over, so that the plant energy goes to the bulb, not the seed, although you might let a few onions bloom to attract beneficial insects. When the onion tops turn yellow and start to fall over, bend (don't break) the tops, from the base of the plant, down to the ground (an iron rake works well for this). In a week or so they will wilt and turn brown, and then you can pull the bulbs up, overlapping tops over bulbs to prevent sunscald, and let them dry on the ground for 2-3 days (unless it's rainy, then move them to a sheltered spot). When the onion skins are dry, cut off the tops (unless you are planning to braid them together), brush off the dirt, and spread on newspapers in a shady, warm, dry place to cure for a week or two. Then store in a cool, dry place in a crate, mesh bag, or braid together and hang up.
ONION SETS		Red, white or yellow varieties as bulbs.
ONION STARTS		
Candy	85-100 days	Large yellow onion with sweet, mild flavor; reliable and easy to grow. Short term storage. Walla Walla type, day-neutral . F1 hybrid.
Patterson	104 days	Yellow, round, medium to large (3-4 in.), with copper skin and a thin neck that dries quickly. Excellent firmness and flavor, great yields, stores up to 12 mos., good sugar levels. Long day . F1 hybrid.
Red Burgundy	100 days	Beautiful heirloom, open pollinated, small to medium red onions with mild sweet flavor. Excellent slicing variety. Short day , so expect smaller bulbs than you would get in a Southern climate. Short term storage.

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Red Zeppelin (a.k.a. Mars, Mercury, or Red Burgermaster)	90 days	Multiple name changes haven't diminished the appeal of this classic red onion. Very hard, with crisp red and white flesh and bright red skin. Sweet and mild flavor is wonderful for hamburgers, sandwiches, salads. Disease resistant and stores well (8 months). Long day . F1 hybrid.
Redwing	90-118 days	Large, deep red onions, better for storage than other reds - red deepens during storage; good for the North. Thick skins, very hard bulbs. Long day . F1 hybrid.
Super Star	85 days	Large, thick ringed white onions with mildly sweet flavor. Excellent for salads, slicing, onion rings, frying. 2001 AAS. Short term storage. Day-neutral . F1 hybrid.
Vidalia Granex	100 days	Flattened, 3-4 in. bulbs, with sweet, mild flavor. Short day , so expect smaller bulbs than you would get in a Southern climate. Short term storage. F1 hybrid.
Walla Walla	95 days	Juicy, sweet, mild, large onion, also good as summer green onion (before skin forms). Cold hardy. Short keeper. Intermediate day . Heirloom first harvested in 1900, and Washington's official state vegetable. Open pollinated.
White Sweet Spanish	110 days	Large, white, globe shaped onions. Medium pungent flavor, little sharpness, crisp and firm. Great for soups and salads. Short keeper. Long day . Open pollinated.
Yellow Sweet Spanish	110 days	Extra large onions with golden brown skin. Very mild, excellent for cooking. Long day . Stores 4-5 mos. Open pollinated.
SCALLIONS/ BUNCHING ONIONS		
Deep Purple	60 days	Reddish purple torpedo shaped onions, slightly larger than other bunching varieties. Mild flavor, great for salads, stir fries. Open pollinated.
Red Baron	60 days	Long day onion that can be harvested as a scallion for salads and stir fries; when plants are 12-14 in. tall, as a mini onion for salads and pickling; or, if left to winter over, will form a 3-4 in. bulb the following spring. Beautiful burgundy color at any size. F1 hybrid.
White Spear	60 days	Large, attractive, non-bulbing scallion, tall and upright with thick stems and blue-green leaves; heat resistant; great for salads and stir fries. Increase white portion by hilling plants or transplanting deeply. Open pollinated.
MINI ONIONS		
Bianca Di Maggio	80 days	Small, flat, white, button onions 2-3 in. x 1.5 in., with tasty green stalks; cipollini type. Intermediate day . Open pollinated.
Pearl Drop	68 days	Small, round, white bulbs. Harvest after bulbs form but while tops are still green; make great scallions too. Grow close together to keep bulb and neck small.
Purplette	60 days	Early maturing, purple-red skinned, golf ball size red onions; cooking or pickling turns burgundy flesh pink; also great picked young as a purple scallion. Mild, sweet flavor. Open pollinated; day-neutral .
SHALLOTS		
Ambition	100-120 days	Coppery skinned, teardrop shaped bulbs, 1.5-2 in. diameter, firm white flesh, delicate flavor. Stores for 60-90 days. F1 hybrid. Long and intermediate day .
Zebrune	100 days	French heirloom shallot, eschalion (banana) type - long, torpedo shaped bulbs, brownish-pink skins, white flesh, mild, almost sweet flavor. Bolt resistant, good keeper. Long day . Open pollinated.

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Companions for Alliums		Beets, carrots, cabbage family, lettuce, chard, chamomile, dill, summer savory, strawberries, tomatoes, peppers. Onions are said to dislike like peas, beans, asparagus. To repel squash bugs, plant lots of alliums with your squash, cucumbers and melons, or use allium clippings to mulch around them.
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