

## LEBANESE GARLIC SAUCE (TOUM)

*Yields about 5 cups*

### INGREDIENTS:

- 2 tsp. kosher salt
- 1 cup peeled garlic cloves (~4 small/med heads)
- 4 cups olive oil
- 1/2 cup fresh squeezed lemon juice

### WHAT TO DO:

- Pulse salt and garlic in a food processor, scraping the sides. Slowly pour in 1/2 cup oil for 30 seconds, then add 2 tsp. lemon juice. Repeat until oil and lemon juice are gone. Process 30 seconds more. Can be stored covered for 1-2 months.

**“Garlic maketh a man wynke, drynke  
and stynke.”**

**-Thomas Nash**

# GROWING GARLIC



**Garlic is divided into two types: hardnecks and softnecks. Hardnecks grow with a hard woody stalk, prefer cooler winters, have a warm to spicy flavor, and store for 3 to 6 months.**

**Softnecks have a softer stem suitable for braiding, milder flavor, and store 6 to 9 months.**

### WHEN TO PLANT

Garlic survives bitterly cold winters underground (or grows frost-hardy leaves where winters are mild to moderate), grows rapidly where the weather warms in spring, and bulbs in the summer. In the North, plant 4-6 weeks before the ground freezes. This gives the plant time to make good root development but not enough time for leaf growth. Where winters are milder, garlic is planted from September through early November.

### SOIL PREPARATION

Garlic needs fertile soil with a lot of organic matter so that the soil remains loose through the long growing season. Growers with heavy clay soils should add a lot of compost before planting; those blessed with lighter soils having naturally loose texture only need to add small amounts of organic matter, or grow and till in green manures (cover crop) prior to planting.

### HOW TO PLANT

- Plant in a location with full sun and rich, well-draining soil.
- Break the bulb into individual cloves. Small cloves usually grow small bulbs, so plant only the larger ones. Use the small cloves in your kitchen.
- Apply single fertilizers (1 TBSP under each clove) of **Down To Earth's Rock Phosphate 0-12-0**, **Bone Meal 3-15-0**, or **Fish Bone Meal 4-12-0** along with **Kelp Meal 1-0.1-2**, or **AZOMITE 0-0-0.2**. (You could also use a complete mix such as **Down To Earth's Rose & Flower Mix 4-8-4**, or **Vegan Mix 3-2-2**).
- Plant cloves 1 inch deep with the pointed tip facing upward. Designate each variety planted with a wooden plant marker.
- Minimum spacing on raised beds is 4 to 8 inches. To grow the largest bulbs, try to space your plants 6 to 12 inches.

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- Mulch with 3 to 4 layers of overlapping newsprint covered with straw or compost. The new shoots will grow right through the mulch in 4 to 8 weeks depending on the variety planted and the weather. The mulch also suppresses weeds.

- When active growth begins in early spring, side dress with a high nitrogen fertilizer like Down To Earth's **Blood Meal 12-0-0**, **Fish Meal 8-6-0**, or high nitrogen **Bat Guano 7-3-1**. Repeat in late March. Follow in late April and late May with a high phosphorus fertilizer such as **Down To Earth's Bone Meal 3-15-0** or **Fish Meal 8-6-0**.

### **WATERING**

Even in the dry West, garlic needs little irrigation as it grows mainly during the wet season, although some irrigation may be necessary in dry spells.

Garlic needs about an inch of water each week during spring growth. Stop watering June 1, or when the leaves begin to yellow and let the bulbs firm up.

### **SEED STALKS**

Hardneck varieties put up a tall, woody, flowering stalk that usually grows bulbils at the top. However, if the plant is allowed to put its energy into these seeds, the bulb forming below the ground will end up smaller in size. To avoid this, cut seed stalks off as soon as the flower head has reached 8-9 inches tall.

### **HARVESTING**

The state of the garlic's foliage is the indicator for harvest, not any particular date. Gauging the right time to harvest is very important. Dug too soon, the skins won't have formed around each clove. Hardneck bulbs, if dug too late may have begun to spread apart in the soil and will not store well. Each year the timing is a little different, so rather than watch the calendar, observe the plants.

As the bulbs mature, the leaves brown off. When there is still about 50% of green leaves remaining on the plant, it is a good time to harvest. (Incidentally, immature bulbs that haven't fully developed skins around their cloves can be chopped up like onions and make delicious additions to cooking).

In very good garlic ground (very fluffy soil) the plants might be pulled by hand, but it is usually better to loosen the soil first with a spading fork. Immediately brush off the soil from around the roots, but do so gently.

Drying is the essential part of curing the bulbs, so do not wash them in water. Immediately move the newly dug garlic out of direct sunlight.

### **CURING**

Some growers tie the garlic plants by their leaves or stalks in loose bundles of 8-12 plants and hang them under cover. Others spread the plants in single layers on screens, drying racks, or slatted shelves. You can attach your wooden plant marker or a label to bunches, or drying racks to keep track of your different varieties.

Garlic stores longer if it is cured with its stalk or leaves attached. Good air circulation is absolutely essential. The plants should cure from 3 weeks to 2 months, depending on the humidity and amount of air circulation. Some growers use a fan in the curing shed.

After curing, you may trim the roots. If the garlic is to be kept in sacks, cut the stalks off 1/2 inch above the bulb and gently clean the bulbs with a soft bristle brush, taking care not to strip off the papery skin.

### **PESTS AND DISEASES**

Garlic is fairly easy to grow and bothered by few pests. Occasionally a grazing deer will nip the growing tips in the spring. Disease-wise the biggest problem is root rot in poorly drained soils, or from over-watering.

### **COMPANION PLANTING**

Garlic should not be planted with peas and beans. Good companions are lettuce, beets, strawberries, and chard. Rotate the crop and do not grow in soils where onions or other alliums were planted the previous year.

### **DANGEROUSLY DELICIOUS GARLIC BLUE CHEESE SPREAD**

#### **INGREDIENTS:**

- 1 pound of fresh blue cheese
- 1-2 heads (yes, whole heads, not cloves) of garlic to taste
- 1 12 ounce jar of Toby's Blue Cheese Dressing

#### **WHAT TO DO:**

- Mince or press peeled garlic.
- Crumble the blue cheese over minced garlic in a medium bowl.
- Blend in Toby's Blue Cheese dressing until smoothly textured.
- Cover the dip and place in the fridge overnight to let the flavors develop.

Serve with bread, crackers, pita, bagels, or enjoy as a veggie dip!