

Additional Garlic Notes from Master Gardeners of Greene County

A good reference for garlic diseases is [this Washington State resource](#).

Additional Notes from Christine Chiu.

"Botanists classify all true garlics under the species *Allium Sativum*. There are two subspecies; *Ophioscorodon* , or hard-necked garlics (*Ophios* for short) and *Sativum* , or soft-necked garlics. The hard-necked garlics were the original garlics and the soft-necked ones were developed or cultivated over the centuries by growers from the original hard-necks through a process of selection."

Recommended Book: [Growing Great Garlic: The Definitive Guide for Organic Gardeners and Small Farmers](#) by Ron L. Engelan [ISBN: 9780963085016]

Where can I purchase garlic for planting?

Keep in mind that heirloom garlic typically runs \$17-\$20 per pound. The variety you worked with and took home from the workshop is **Inchelium Red**. By planting it, you'll be carrying on the tradition of planting an [heirloom vegetable](#). Look [here](#) for places to purchase this variety. There are several online sources if you'd like to order your own.

How do you grow garlic?

This is a comprehensive [guide to growing garlic](#), and [another one](#) you can refer to.

What's a garlic scape?

For definition look [here](#). Garlic scapes are absolutely delicious. Once you try some, you'll wonder why they don't sell them in the grocery, but they are commonly found at farmers markets including our own Greater Springfield Farmer's Market when they're in season. When harvesting your own, be sure to harvest before there's a full curl, while the scape is young and tender. As with most vegetables, the larger and more mature it is, the more tough and fibrous it can be. Almost all hardneck garlic has scapes. Softneck garlic generally does not produce scapes, but there are exceptions.

About our garlic from our workshop:

The Inchelium Red garlic you have from the workshop was grown in the [potager](#). It was planted September 15, 2009 and harvested June 21, 2010. If you plant in September (in this area), the garlic has a an opportunity to grow an established root system before winter sets in. Garlic requires 40 days of below freezing temps to break into cloves.

How about garlic recipes?

Many of you stated in your survey that you were interested in recipes, garlic lends itself to so many things I suggest the [this site](#). Be sure to read the user comments where you'll find all sorts of tips from people who have made the dish.

And what about garlic breath?

Assuming you're going to be eating all this garlic, you might want to be garlic friendly to others by using any one of these recommendations here to [keep garlic breath to a minimum](#).

Where can I learn more about the technique of braiding garlic?

[Watch and learn](#). (The Internet is so useful.)

What's difference between hard neck garlic vs softneck garlic?

Hardneck garlic has a shorter shelf life and is revered among garlic connoisseurs. Softneck garlic has a longer shelf life, hence it's what you'll find in the produce section of your grocer.

1) **Softneck Garlic** - Softneck garlic is sometimes called "common" garlic, but there is nothing common about it. Softneck varieties are easy to grow and tolerate a wide variety of climate conditions. The bulbs can be rather large with multiple layers of cloves. They have superior shelf life, and under proper conditions can be stored for up to 9 months. And they have some wonderful flavors. Planted bulbs generally yield 5-8 times their weight at harvest. A half pound will provide cloves for 20-30 plants. Hint: Plant the biggest cloves, and eat the rest.

* [Inchelium Red](#) - A favorite among the softnecks. Its relatively spicy but prolonged taste won the 1990 garlic tasting test at Rodale Kitchens. Originally found growing in the Colville Indian Reservation, it is an "artichoke" softneck. The bulbs can be rather large, sometimes 3 inches across, and can have up to 20 cloves. It stores well. The flavor becomes more pronounced over time.

2) **Hardneck Garlic** - This is where the real flavor is, say garlic aficionados. Since hardnecks have far fewer cloves, the cloves are larger and easier to peel. The tall scapes, when cut, make a great stir fry vegetable and also a stunning floral piece. Planted bulbs can yield 5-8 times their weight in harvest. A half pound will provide cloves for between 15-20 plants (plant the larger cloves, eat the smaller ones).

* [Romanian](#) - A long storing porcelain hardneck. The bulbs have large, easy to peel cloves. The taste is hot and pungent with a considerable bite. Speaking of bite, if you have vampire problems, this is the one for you.

*[Korean Red](#) - A big bulbed hardneck from Korea, where folks really know their garlic. Its garlic that makes kim chee a world wide favorite! The big cloves are also easy to peel.

*[German Red](#) - A large plant with tall scapes that can produce rather large bulbs can have considerable red color in the wrapper. The cloves themselves have a brownish skin. The taste is hot and zingy. It can produce between 10 and 16 cloves per bulb.

*[Spanish Roja](#) - A very versatile and tasty variety. Up to 12 cloves per bulb. Peel easily, store up to 4-6 months. Several very large cloves with each bulb. It has been described as the most piquant garlic in the world. It may have been brought to the U.S. by immigrants before 1900. It seems to prefer colder winters.

3) **Bulbils** - Hardneck garlic flowers produce clusters of miniature "bulbs", which while not true seed, serve essentially the same purpose. A bulbil planted in the fall (spring) will produce tasty garlic shoots in the spring (early summer). If the plants are left to grow through the first season, they will produce small bulbs, called "rounds". These in turn can be replanted, and will produce regular bulbs in year two.

4) **Elephant Garlic** - They grow well in most parts of the country. Mulching with straw or grass clippings and keeping the soil relatively moist, even during the winter, promotes larger bulbs. Elephant garlic or Russian garlic (*Allium ampeloprasum* var. *ampeloprasum*) is not a true garlic, but actually a variant of the species to which the garden leek belongs. It has a tall, solid, flowering stalk and broad, flat leaves much like those of the leek, but forms a bulb consisting of very large, garlic-like cloves. The flavor of these, while not exactly like garlic, is much more similar to garlic than to leeks. The flavor is milder than garlic, and much more palatable to some people than garlic when used raw as in salads. Excellent for roasting, stews, roast vegetables and garlic mashed potatoes.

How serious about garlic do you want to get?

If you really want to learn more about garlic you can learn about the different types of garlic, and then you can get specific about varieties of each type.

Hardneck "*Ophio*" garlics include three types: **Rocambole**, **Purple Stripe**, and **Porcelain**. These types are more challenging to grow. They need good soil and good care, including seed head removal. Most people agree that hardneck garlics have more full bodied flavor than softnecks. But they don't store as long.

Softneck garlics are of two varietal types. **Artichokes** are the easiest and most productive to grow, as well as the most adaptable to varying climates and soils. They

store 8 to 10 months. **Silverskins** need better soil and prefer mild winter climates for best character. They store longest of any garlic, but they are also the most difficult to peel.

Softneck sub-varieties include: **Creoles, Turbans and Asiatics** also do best in milder climates. In other ways they are more like hardnecks. Rocambole requires freezing temperatures to do well.

But wait, there's more...

There's plenty of opportunity to fill your garden beds with garlic galore. For instance, this site shows photos and descriptions of [over 100 varieties of garlic](#). "There are said to be over 600 cultivated sub-varieties of garlic in the world, although most of them may be selections of only a handful of basic types that have been grown widely and developed their own characteristics over the centuries as local growing conditions changed." Have fun! If you'd like to learn about the history of garlic, which is actually quite interesting, [look here](#). It's also one of the most comprehensive sites on the subject of garlic.