



PLANT FACT SHEET

Allium sativum L.

GENUS *Allium* FAMILY Amaryllidaceae

COMMON NAMES Garlic

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Leaves, Bulb, Seeds, Herb, Spice, Stem, Vegetable, Flowers

The cloves are used in small amounts to flavour food.

The leaves can also be used. Leaves should be cut before they are mature.

DESCRIPTION

An onion family plant. It is an erect herb. It grows one year, then flowers the next. It grows about 40 cm high. This onion family plant has a number of tightly packed bulbs (cloves) wrapped in papery scale leaves. The true leaves of the plant are long, flat and solid. Leaves are 2.5 cm wide. The roots are side roots. The number of cloves per bulb varies from 16-50 depending on variety. Flowers are borne on a long stalk in a head where the flowers are on equal length stalks from one point forming a rounded head.

HABITAT

A temperate plant. It grows in the tropical highlands mostly between 1600 and 2200 m but will grow satisfactorily down to 500 m. In Nepal it grows to 3000 m altitude. There are kinds that will grow in hot coastal tropical places. Best bulb development occurs with temperatures up to 30°C. It is frost resistant. High humidity or high rainfall is not suitable. It is best grown in low rainfall areas with irrigation. Bulb development is favoured with long day lengths. It does best with pH 6-7. It suits hardiness zones 8-10. In Yunnan.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants are grown by planting individual cloves. The individual segments of the clove are separated out then planted. A spacing of 20 cm is suitable. They should be planted into a deeply dug but firm seedbed. They are planted almost covered with fine soil. Cloves or "rounds" are best planted at the end of the wet season. Plants rarely produce fertile flowers or seed. They can be grown from seed.

Harvesting and Seed Production

Bulbs should be ready about 90-120 days from planting. Bulbs can be stored at 25-30°C for 90 days with low humidity and good air circulation.

NOTES

There are about 300-700 *Allium* species. Most species of *Allium* are edible (Flora of China). All alliums are edible but they may not all be worth eating! They have also been put in the family Alliaceae. It has anticancer properties.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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