

ANOTHER HERB HERBERT FAVOURITE HERBS

FACT SHEET

Garlic *Allium sativum*

There are some 700 species of bulbous biennials and perennials in this genus. Latin gar (a spear) and leac (a pot herb) in reference to the shape of its leaves.

Garlic has been recorded in its cultivation and used for centuries in Asia and then by the Romans and Egyptians, soon spreading to other parts of the world. During wars it has been used as an antiseptic, the raw juice used to cleanse wounds. The lives of thousands of men were saved by the use of the herb, by stopping septic wounds. Through the Middle Ages, Garlic was used heavily during outbreaks of infectious fevers such as plague and it was also used to ward off evil spirits like witches.

Garlic continues as a reputed and widely used medicinal and culinary herb today. Garlic oil is so popular in Russia that it is referred to as "Russian Penicillin".

DESCRIPTION

Long, broad, grass-like green leaves arise from a composite bulb made up of many segments or 'cloves', which are covered in a dried white papery membrane.

The flower stem that reaches about 60cm high, consists of an outer sheath enclosing a mixture of small, whitish-pink flowers and bulbils.

PARTS USED

Leaves, bulbs

PROPERTIES

A pungent herb with anti-bacterial action.

USES OF THE HERB

Culinary

Garlic improves the flavour of so many dishes it is almost indispensable in culinary cooking. Also it is a natural flavouring in cooking and salt-reduced diets. It is employed in butters, vinegars and salt.

Medicinal

Garlic contains essential oils rich in sulphur compounds, copper, manganese, iron, calcium, Vitamins A, B1, B2 and C, plus antibacterial substances.

It is one of the few herbs that have been useful in all disorders of the human body, as an antiseptic, general tonic and used as a preventative medicine against ill health, colds and infections. Garlic is said to help digestion by stimulating the digestive organs, therefore relieves various problems associated with poor digestion. It has been used to treat lung ailments, high blood pressure, nervous disorders, digestive problems, infections and against parasites.

Heat may destroy many active properties so if best results are to be obtained, it must be taken fresh in the form of a fresh juice, cold extract, oil of Garlic.

To remove the aroma of garlic from the breath, fresh parsley is chewed or taken in some form.

Insect Repellent

A garden spray made from garlic is a natural deterrent against a multitude of garden pests, but because it is a natural insecticide it works as a contact spray. It must be sprayed 2-3 times for total annihilation of the insects.

CULTIVATION

Garlic requires the same treatment to other similar type bulbs eg onions. Well turned rich, moist, well drained soil with plenty of organic matter such as compost, blood and bone, ash and lime. Garlic requires a good sunny position and to be kept as free from weeds as possible. Planting time is autumn/fall. Only organic bulbs should be planted. Most bulbs in supermarkets are treated with a chemical to stop them shooting.

HARVEST

Dig bulbs when leaves begin to wither in summer. Plant several of the withering leaves together and hang in a dry airy place till completely dry, then store inside in an airy place eg an open weave basket.

Height 30cm-1m (12-36in) x
Spread 23-30cm (9-12in)



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GARLIC ALL PURPOSE GARDEN SPRAY

(Effective against most soft bodied insects)

Ground garlic
Ground onions/chives/shallots
Several long pods of Hot Pepper (dried or fresh)
Cheap biodegradable dishwashing liquid
1 tsp water

Grind ingredients in a blender with equal quantity of water. Cover and mash them with a little water. Let stand overnight and dilute with water at a rate of 1 part mixture to 20 parts water. Horseradish roots and tops and peppercorns may be added to the mash for better results. Dishwashing liquid is wetting agent; helps the spray stay on the affected leaves longer.



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