

# URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

## How to cultivate the best soil for garlic:

Some people may be content with buying their garlic from a grocery store, since it is a relatively cheap vegetable and is usually in abundance. At the grocery store, it also is sold in different varieties, such as minced, cloves and garlic powder. However, gardeners are of a different breed and likely wish to grow their own garlic at home. If you have grown garlic, you know it doesn't grow well in typical, fertile, rich soil like many other vegetables do.

### What kind of soil does garlic need?

Garlic grows best in a well-drained sandy loam soil. Depending on the area in which you are growing your garlic, your soil may be too rich, or maybe it has more of a clay consistency. Too much clay will cause the soil to cling to the bulbs, which is difficult to remove upon harvest and may even stain the garlic wrapper. Also, clay soil holds more water than sandy, loamy soil does, and the garlic will rot if it sits in standing water for too long. If you have clay-like soil and you cannot amend it, it is best to grow garlic in raised beds or even large pots, at least 12 inches deep since the garlic bulb develops below the soil line. For those who want to be nifty, you can even transform an old milk jug into a pot to grow garlic.

### How to amend soil for garlic growth:

If the gardener wants to amend their soil to make it more of the sandy loam consistency instead of opting to grow in raised beds or containers, that is possible as well. To amend the soil, the gardener must add organic matter to the soil. To do this naturally, they



[Garlic bulbs available at ufseeds.com](http://ufseeds.com)

can implement summer cover crops since garlic grows best in cooler seasons, like the fall. A summer cover crop mix of buckwheat and cowpeas will be the best option to amend the soil to make it the best fit to grow garlic in. This type of cover crop mix will take 6 to 8 weeks to mature, and then several weeks after that to fully break down into the soil, so be sure your planning is well organized so you aren't scrambling to plant the garlic at the wrong time if your summer cover crop took too long.

### Other soil tips:

When growing garlic, make sure to grow it in soil with a pH of 6.0 to 7.5. Ensure the soil is well fertilized and has plenty of nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium to provide good growing conditions and healthy bulbs. Adding sulfur also helps add to the garlic's healing abilities. To amend your soil to contain more sulfur, add gypsum to the beds in the spring.



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