

# Did You Know?



## Garlic, *Allium sativum*

- Garlic is an herb in the lily family and is related to chives, onions and leeks.
- Garlic has been used for over 5000 years and has a long history of being valued as both a medicinal and culinary herb.
- Stinking rose and poor-man's treacle (or cure-all) are among the names that garlic is known by.
- The characteristic odor comes from the presence of sulfur compounds.
- In addition to the bulbs, the flower scapes, bulbils within the scape, and flowers are edible as well.
- Divided into two types: hardneck (which has a woody stalk extending up the center of the bulb) and softneck, which is the type most commonly found in grocery stores.
- The characteristic odor comes from the presence of a sulfur compound called allicin. This compound is correlated to many health benefits. Garlic is linked to improved immunity, anti-inflammatory, cardiovascular health, decreased acne, treats athlete's foot and is antibacterial.
- Use the 10-minute rule when cooking with garlic. Let cut or crushed garlic sit for 10-minutes before cooking so that the allicin levels reach their maximum, giving ultimate health benefits.
- Black garlic is said to contain twice the amount of antioxidants than fresh garlic.
- Black garlic is heat-aged and slowly fermented which transforms both the flavor and garlic color.
- Elephant garlic (*Allium ampeloprasum* var. 'Holmense') is not true garlic and is more similar to a leek.
- Greek midwives hung garlic in the birthing rooms as an offering to goddess Hecate for a safe delivery.
- People used to rub cloves of fresh garlic on their chimneys and windowsills to keep demons (or vampires) out.
- Italian nobles looked down on "garlic eaters" because garlic was thought to be an ingredient of the working class or peasants as it grew plentiful and was readily available.
- Garlic was once used in a topical application to treat leprosy.
- Brides carried garlic in their pocket on their wedding day to protect them from evil.
- In the Victorian language of flowers, garlic signifies both a "charm against evil" and "I can't stand you". In Sanskrit, garlic means "slayer of monsters".
- As a key component in "Four Thieves Vinegar", garlic is believed to prevent infection during the Great Plague and protected the looting thieves.

Watch the webinar on garlic with Kristin Graves, Author of *The Garlic Companion* on October 15, 2024. Many thanks for her contributions to this DYK Sheet!

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