

# DID YOU Know...

## GARLIC – *ALLIUM SATIVUM*



- Garlic can be grouped into two types: hardneck and softneck
- Garlic most commonly found in grocery stores is the softneck type, which makes up the majority of the commercial crop in the United States.
- Hardneck garlic is distinguished by a woody stalk that extends into the center of the bulb.
- Garlic has been used for over 5000 years and is traced back to central Asia.
- Garlic goes by many names, including “stinking rose” and poor-man’s treacle (or cure-all).
- Garlic has a long history of being valued for both medicinal and culinary purposes, which is still going strong today.
- The characteristic garlic odor comes from the content of sulfur compounds.

## FOLKLORE

Garlic has been both associated with good and evil over the centuries. A few stories follow:

- Garlic has been used as cash for ancient transactions, to preserve meat, enhance romance, repel pests and vampires, as well as to ward off disease and evil spirits.
- Six cloves of garlic accompanied King Tutankhamen’s journey into the afterlife, to prevent any evil spirits from blocking the journey of the soul.
- Roman laborer ate garlic to improve their courage. Egyptian pyramid builders, early Olympians and Greek and Roman soldiers ate it for strength and vitality.
- Ancient Athenians ate raw garlic while listening to their politicians.
- As a key component in “Four Thieves Vinegar”, garlic was believed to prevent infection during the Great Plague and protect looting thieves.
- In Sanskrit, garlic means “slayer of monsters”.
- Brides can carry garlic in their pocket on their wedding day to protect them from evil and in Sicily, garlic is placed in the birthing bed for a successful delivery.
- In the Victorian language of flowers, garlic signifies both a “charm against evil” and “I can’t stand you”.

More details regarding garlic’s place in history, folklore, medicine, art and literature can be found in The Herb Society of America’s Essential Guide to Garlic:

<http://herbsociety.org/factsheets/Garlic%20Guide.pdf>

Link to Ohio Magazine Article:

[http://www.ohiomagazine.com/Main/Articles/Flavor\\_Kick\\_4828.aspx](http://www.ohiomagazine.com/Main/Articles/Flavor_Kick_4828.aspx)