

Column Name- The Heartland Minute

By: Ben Sims

K-State Research and Extension Greenwood County

Agriculture Extension Agent

*“Garlic: Turns Out, It Likes Our Climate”*

October is a good time to plant garlic because the cloves can begin to develop roots and shoots before freezing temperatures arrive. Our Kansas climate is suitable for growing a variety of garlic types. By planting in the fall, the cloves have time to go through a chilling period, which is important for bulb and flower growth.

KSU horticulture expert, Cynthia Domenghini, suggests buying large, mature garlic bulbs from a reputable grower, rather than a grocery store. Then, separate the bulbs into individual cloves before planting them.

The papery covering does not need to be removed. Cloves should be planted 1-2 inches deep and six inches apart within five days to prevent them from drying out. It is recommended to conduct a soil test and fertilize the crop according to the recommendations from the analysis. The cloves should be watered in well, then apply a layer of mulch in the late fall or early winter (after a few frosts) to insulate the soil.

Keep the area weed-free and remove the mulch in mid-spring so the soil will have the chance to warm. Bulbs should be ready to harvest next summer when the lower third of the foliage is yellow, and the cloves are beginning to separate. Happy Fall!

Information comes from Kansas State University horticulture expert, Cynthia Domenghini.