Growing Great Garlic

- Garlic Varieties
- Soil Preparation and Planting
- Growing and Harvesting
- Disease
- Curing & Storage
- Eating
Reference Material

- U of M Extension article written mostly by Dr. Carl Rosen -- Google “U of M Growing Garlic”
- PlumCreekGarlic.com – Look at Resources tab
Garlic Varieties

- Hardneck garlic
  - Develops a flower stalk (scape)
- Softneck garlic
  - Does not develop a flower stalk
  - Not as hardy here in central MN
- Varieties within each type
- Examples we grow
  - Music
  - Chesnok Red
  - Georgian Crystal
  - Siberian
  - German Extra Hardy
Where to Buy ‘Seed Stock?'

- Locally of course!
  - Plum Creek Garlic
  - MN Grown
  - MN Garlic Festival
    - Hutchinson, MN
    - 2nd Saturday in August
- But watch out for Nematodes
- ‘Store’ garlic is typically a softneck from either China or California
Soil Preparation & Planting

- Lots of organic matter ideally
- Should drain well ideally
- pH should be slightly acidic (6.5 to 7) ideally
- Plant 2-4 weeks before ground freezes solid 😊
  - Around mid-October here
- Spacing is highly variable
  - Four to eight inches is common
- Depth is also highly variable and depends on mulch
  - Heavy soils – about ½ to 1” below surface
  - Light soils – ‘thumb’ deep
- Clove should be pointy part up or basal plate (root) down - the way they came out of the ground!
Soil Preparation & Planting -- Continued

- **Mulch**
  - Similar to tulip or other bulbs
  - Straw, grass, leaves
  - Watch for weeds (and other stuff)
  - Remove in spring for earlier warm-up and easier fertilizing
  - Leave on for less weeding and to incorporate at end of season for soil building

- **Fertilizer**
  - Garlic is a heavy nitrogen feeder
  - U of M recommends 1/3 in fall and 2/3 incorporated in spring before Memorial Day
Growing and Harvesting

- Hardnecks have Scapes
  - Usually ready in mid-June
- Weed regularly
- Water only if dry and cut back as you move into July
- Harvest when 3-4 leaves have dried or 3-4 are still green for hardnecks
- Softnecks flop over when ready
Disease

- Bloat Nematode – deadly when brought on farm
- Fusarium – managed via rotation
- Viruses – in all garlic, usually not too serious
- Various ‘surface’ diseases – both pre and post harvest
- Aster Yellows – hope and prayer
2012 Aster Yellows in upper Midwest
Curing & Storage

- Dig or pull (carefully)
- Bundle and hang (carefully) or put on screens
- Moisture is your enemy
- Air circulation is critical
- Ideal drying takes place in warm, dry conditions
- Cut roots and leaves when dry (2-4 weeks)
- Remove one or two wrappers for good looks
- Long term storage – cool, dry and out of the sun
Eating

- Have fun trying different methods – raw and cooked
  - Cut ¼” off top (not roots) and roast for ½ hour in 350 degree oven with olive oil until soft and then squeeze onto crackers or bread – yum!
  - Put whole cloves in with root vegetables and bake
  - Add to stir fry at the last minute
- Time changes flavor of the bulb
- Cooking time determines ‘heat’
- Don’t forget the scapes in June!