

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

From Seed to Harvest: A beginner's guide to growing shallots

Shallots are a type of onion and is a close relative to the garlic, leek and chive families. It looks similar to an onion but smaller and more elongated, and its flavor is milder with a slight hint of garlic taste to it. They make for great onion substitutes in recipes, and they are easy to grow in the garden.

To plant:

Shallots can be direct seeded or started indoors early. If direct seeding them into the garden, choose an area that hasn't grown a member of the onion family in the past three years. Plant seeds 1/2 inch deep and 1/2 inch to 1 inch apart in rows set 10 to 18 inches apart. Plant them two to four weeks before the last frost. Spacing the seeds out this distance will produce approximately one bulb per plant. If you wish for your shallot plants to produce more than one bulb, plant seeds 6 to 8 inches apart.

To grow:

Shallots like full sun and actually do best when planted in raised beds because they prefer well-drained soil. Since shallots have a shallow root system, it means they can dry out quickly and require consistent moisture, especially during droughts or drier seasons. Be sure to weed and water frequently - the shallow root systems will require the frequent watering, and if weeds get out of control, they can hog the moisture from the shallots's roots.

Shallots typically don't fall victim to many diseases, and they can even deter certain pests if planted near other plants, similar to the way onions and garlic keep pests away



[Shallot seeds available at ufseeds.com](http://ufseeds.com)

from other plants. However, onion maggots can be a problem. To prevent these pests from damaging your shallots, use floating row covers. Shallots prefer soil with a pH of 6.3 to 6.8.

To harvest:

Both the shallot's green tops and their bulbs can be eaten. Tops are ready to harvest within 30 days and are frequently cooked into soups and stews. Bulbs are ready to harvest in 90 days. The bulbs are ready to harvest when the tops begin to wither and die. The bulbs may begin to protrude from the soil and the skin may look brown and papery. To harvest the shallots, dig up the bulbs, shake the dirt off and braid the tops together. Prior to consumption, allow the shallots to dry. Place them in a mesh bag and store them in a cool and dry location for approximately one week to allow them to dry.

What shallots crave:

Shallots do best when fertilized with lots of



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nitrogen, so add a fish emulsion or other nitrogen-heavy fertilizer three weeks after planting and continue to fertilize every three to four weeks. Discontinue fertilization approximately one month before harvest.

Where to buy shallot seeds:

Check out our shallot seeds on our website at ufseeds.com!



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