

Common Name: **Garlic**

Genus: *Allium*

Species: *sativum*

Family: Amaryllidaceae

AKA: Garlicke, Poor-Man's Treacle. Anglo-Saxon name origin, *gar* (a spear) and *lac* (a plant) in reference to the shape of the leaves.(1)

## Historical Uses:



**Medical:** “Garlic is an enemy to all cold poisons, and to bitings of venomous beasts: therefore Galen nameth it Theriaca Rusticorum, or husbandmans Treacle.\* It taketh away the roughnesse of the throat, it helpeth an old cough, it provoketh urine, it breaketh and consumeth winde, and is also a remedie for the dropsie which proceedeth a cold cause. It killeth wormes in the belly, and driveth them forth. It helpeth a very cold stomacke, as it is a preservative against the contagious and pestilent aire.” (2)

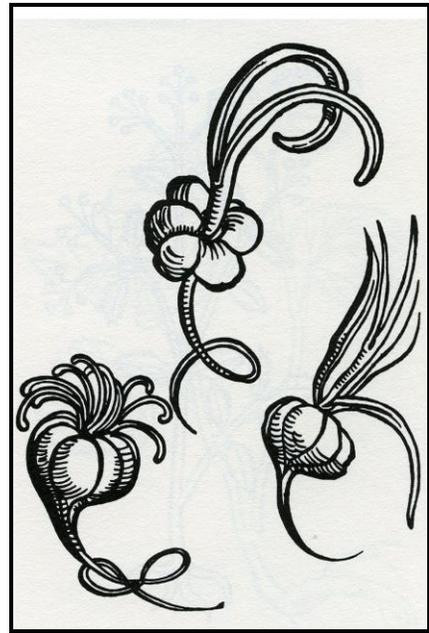
“Garlic has the right warmth and grows from strength of the dew that comes from the time of the first sleep at night until it is nearly daybreak and when it is already morning. It is healthier for healthy and sick people to eat it than leeks. It ought to be eaten raw because when cooked, it is sour, like spoiled wine.” (3)

“It purgeth the head, helpeth lethargy, is a good preservative against, and a remedy for any plague, sore, or foul ulcer; taketh away the spots and blemishes of the skin, easeth pains in the ears, ripeneth and breaketh imposthumes, or other swellings. And for all diseases for which onions are ineffectual.” (4)

“Also known to drive off serpents, scorpions, wild beasts, and cured the bites of mad dogs. Garlic healed hemorrhoids and cured toothache, scrofula, rheumatism, heatstroke, hysteria, smallpox, and leprosy.” (5)

**Culinary:** Garlic has also been long used as a culinary herb.

**Folklore/Astrology:** “Garlic has long been believed to ward against evil. Under the dominion of Mars. It is said (Muslim legend) to have sprung under the left foot of *Satan* as he fled from Paradise, onion from this right. To dream of garlic foretold domestic troubles and the uncovering of secrets best left hidden. It was placed atop piles of stones at crossroads as a supper for *Hecate*, goddess of night and the underworld.(6)



**Additional Historical Facts:** \*Historically, the Middle English term *triacle* was used by herbalists and apothecaries to describe a medicine (also called theriac or theriaca) — composed of many ingredients — that was used as an antidote treatment for poisons, snakebites or various ailments. (7)

One of the most ancient herbs as it was recorded in Babylonian times (c. 3000BCE) and found in the tomb of Tutankhamun. (8)

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## Contemporary Uses:

**Parts Used:** Bulb

**Medicinal:** In 1858, Louis Pasteur verified garlic's antiseptic properties. Today the herb is used to rid the body of gas pains and intestinal worms. It has been proven to be an antispasmodic and may also be effective in lowering cholesterol levels in blood, reducing hypertension, and working as an expectorant in respiratory ailments.

Up to WWI it was used as an antiseptic, the juice used to clean wounds and cuts, protecting them from infection.

Used internally to prevent infection and to treat colds, influenza, bronchitis, whooping cough, gastroenteritis, and dysentery. Externally used for skin problems, especially acne, and fungal infections. It has also been found recently to reduce glucose metabolism in diabetes, slow development of arteriosclerosis, and lower the risk of further heart attacks in myocardial infarct patients. (9)

**Insect Repellent:** Garlic can be used as a spray in the garden to repel insect pests and on pets to repel fleas.

**Culinary:** Sautéed or fresh garlic tastes vibrant and onion like. It is added to many dishes, including spaghetti sauce, pork roast, herb butter, fresh salads, beans, stuffing, dressings, stews, soups, and marinades. The cloves are either minced or added whole and removed before the dish is served. (10)

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**Area of Origin:** Europe

**Physical description:** Long and narrow leaves with flat face similar to grass. Compound bulb consisting of numerous bulblets known as “cloves” which are enclosed within a whitish skin. Whitish flowers are displayed at the end of a stalk rising directly from the bulb. (11)

**Plant type:** perennial

**Height:** ~ 2 feet

**Flower color:** near white

**Flowering period:** June-July

**Soil type:** roadsides, pastures, open woods

**Soil requirements:** light, well-drained soil, but can handle heavier soils

**Hardiness zone:** USDA 4-9

**Sun requirements:** prefers full sun

**Propagation:** Plant cloves in early spring, as soon as the ground can be worked. When flower stalks appear, cut them back so that the plant's energy goes into producing

useful bulbs. Cloves can be planted in late autumn so that they will not sprout in the fall. (12)

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### **Sources**

1. Grieve, pg. 342-345
2. Gerard, pg. 177-178
3. Von Bingen, pg. 75
4. Culpepper, p.66
5. Anderson, p.21-22.
6. Ibid.
7. Oxford English dictionary [ISBN 978-1-85152-101-2](#)
8. Bown, pg. 113-114
9. Ibid
10. Orzolek, Michael. *Herbs*. Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences. 2012. Web. 30 Jan. 2012. < <http://extension.psu.edu/herbs/all-herbs>>
11. Grieve, pg. 342-345
12. Orzolek, Michael. *Herbs*. Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences. 2012. Web. 30 Jan. 2012. < <http://extension.psu.edu/herbs/all-herbs>>

### **Illustrations:**

1. Schoffer Herbal 1485