



The Intricacies of Preserving Garlic

You have harvested all that garlic and hopefully have it curing in a dry, well ventilated area. In case you are wondering if there are other ways to keep it, I will elaborate here. Bulbs of hardneck garlic will keep 3-5 months in a cool (60 degree), dry, well ventilated, dark place. Hardneck is mainly what we grow (it produces the scape in the spring). Grocery store garlic is usually softneck.

Fresh garlic has a pungent flavor caused by a chemical reaction that occurs when the clove is broken. The enzyme alliinase converts alliin to allicin which is the chemical responsible for the flavor. Pungency diminishes after opening the clove as allicin is quickly broken down. Roasted garlic is sweet because the enzyme is destroyed by cooking.

Carefully following preserving instructions will enable you to keep it refrigerated in vinegar or wine. You can dry it in a dehydrator. Surprise to me, you can freeze it as well. It is, however, a low acid vegetable making Botulism quite possible; therefore, ***you must follow preservation instructions to the letter for your safety.***

You must be extremely careful when storing garlic in oil. Do not store it at room temperature since that is the ideal environment for *Clostridium botulinum* to grow and produce toxin. The same goes for roasted garlic stored in oil. See [Garlic: Safe Methods to Store, Preserve, and Enjoy](#) produced by UC Davis for complete detailed instructions. The instructions are clear and I would feel comfortable consuming garlic I preserved according to the directions in this article

Other things you can do now in the garden:

You can do some 'spot cleaning', consisting of renewed edging and mulching, deadheading, cutting down the unsightly old daylily foliage as well as any other foliage beyond it's prime. Weed. Weed. Weed, unless you want slugs and fungus.

Don't promote soft growth of trees and shrubs by fertilizing anymore this season. It's time for them to move toward their hardening-off phase. However, you can feed roses one more time, BEFORE August 15.

You should start seeding fall crops of lettuces, arugula, carrots and beets. Fall plantings of broccoli, kale, cabbage, brussels sprouts and kohlrabi are especially delectable due to the cooler weather including a few frosts. This Mother Earth News

article explains how to overcome the obstacles of excessive August heat, caterpillars and other stumbling blocks [How Can I Grow a Good Fall Broccoli Crop?](#)

The September meeting of the Haddam Club is closed as we are going on a field trip to a rooftop garden in Middletown.

Digging In Recipe of the Month:

Here is a cool and refreshing August Recipe from “**Digging In**”:

Iced Cucumber Punch

by Marge DeBold

I make an ice ring for my punch using cucumber and lemon slices and garnish with fresh mint.

Prep: 30 minutes

Yield about 1 gallon

Punch:

8 large cucumbers
12 cups seltzer water
1/3 cup lemon juice
Punch Base

Punch Base

1 cup water
3 cups sugar
¾ cup cider vinegar
½ cup lemon juice
2 TBSP chopped mint

Peel, quarter, remove seeds and coarsely chop cucumbers. Puree. Put in strainer lined with double layer of cheesecloth. Strain and press until all juice is removed – about 3 cups juice. (I tie cheesecloth into pouch and hang it to drip, then I twist it and squeeze to get out as much juice as possible). Chill. Just before serving, mix Punch Base, the seltzer, cucumber juice and ½ cup lemon juice. Can be made ahead holding off on the seltzer addition until last minute. Pour over ice to serve.

Punch Base: Combine water, sugar, vinegar and lemon juice; bring to a boil and cook until thickened (like room temperature honey). Remove from heat and add chopped fresh mint. Chill for up to 2 days. Strain before adding to punch.