The Health Benefits of Garlic – and How to Grow It Successfully 🌱

🌦️Long-Range Weather Forecast

After a strong influx of solar activity, including a double Coronal Mass Ejection (Cannibal CME) combined with strong solar winds, we experienced three days of unusually warm weather for this time of year.

With high pressure close to or across the UK for much of this period, lasting until the following weekend, we can expect largely fine and dry weather in many areas, although there may be some overnight mist and fog, along with cooler temperatures.

Weak frontal systems could bring occasional rain from the north over the weekend, followed by rain and showers from the west.

Winds are expected to remain mostly light, with temperatures around the seasonal average and frosty mornings in exposed areas.

⚠️Expect the weather to change drastically after **28 October**.

In the meantime, make sure your half-hardy plants are protected by spraying with valerian preparation and/or using crop covers.

🧄The Health Benefits of Garlic

Garlic has long been valued for its potential health benefits, including:

- 🩸Improving glucose and lipid metabolism
- ❤️Lowering blood pressure
- 🛡️Enhancing the immune response
- 💧Helping to thin the blood

The recommended optimal daily intake is **four cloves of garlic**.

🌿What makes garlic so beneficial for our health?

When fresh garlic is chopped or crushed, it produces a chemical compound called **allicin**.

Allicin gives fresh garlic its distinctive smell and pungent flavour, but it breaks down during prolonged cooking.

Allicin is a type of antioxidant. Antioxidants are natural compounds found in fruits and vegetables that may help reduce inflammation and have been linked to a lower risk of cardiovascular disease.

🩸**Does garlic affect glucose and lipid metabolism in humans?**

One study investigated the effects of garlic on blood lipid and glucose levels in humans through a systematic review and meta-analysis.

The researchers concluded that garlic supplementation improved certain blood lipid measures compared with control groups. They suggested that garlic may benefit people with disorders related to glucose and lipid metabolism.

🔗Read the study: https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11174586/

Another study found that garlic was more effective than a placebo and comparable to metformin in reducing fasting blood glucose levels. It suggested that garlic could be a valuable addition to the management of patients with type 2 diabetes.

🔗Read the study: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/261277383_Effects_of_garlic_on_blood_glucose_levels_and_HbA1c_in_patients_with_type_2_diabetes_mellitus

❤️**Does garlic lower blood pressure?**

Clinical trials have found that garlic can lower systolic blood pressure by **5–10 mmHg**, which is particularly relevant for adults living with both diabetes and hypertension.

🌱**Challenges When Growing Garlic**

Garlic is usually trouble-free when grown in good conditions. However, like onions and leeks, it can experience several growing problems.

Here are some common challenges and how to address them.

🌿**Cloves forming on the stem**

This is usually caused by adverse weather conditions, such as fluctuating temperatures in spring.

These cloves can still be used as normal.

Biodynamic tip: Apply valerian preparation when weather extremes occur.

🧄**Bulbs not dividing into cloves**

This can result from insufficient cold weather during winter.

Plant garlic on its own to ensure full exposure to cold nights.

🌸**Flowering (bolting)**

Hardneck garlic readily produces flower stems. These should be removed as soon as they appear and can be used in stir-fries.

Softneck garlic occasionally produces flower stems due to poor growing conditions, such as high temperatures or drought.

Biodynamic tip: Apply horn manure and valerian preparation during extreme weather conditions. Water generously during dry periods, even in winter.

🧄**Split bulbs**

This can happen when garlic is harvested too late.

Make sure you harvest your garlic early enough to prevent the bulbs from splitting.

🌱**Green cloves**

These are usually caused by shallow planting.

The cloves can still be used as normal, but they are unlikely to store well.

🍂**Rust**

Rust can affect garlic foliage when the crop is maturing in damp weather.

To avoid problems with rust, harvest the garlic early.

🌿**Healthy Soil Makes All the Difference**

Garlic, like other members of the onion family, does not like competition from weeds because it has a shallow root system.

To help avoid these growing challenges, prepare the soil thoroughly with **well-rotted, humified compost**.

This helps buffer extremes in soil moisture and moderate temperature fluctuations, creating more stable growing conditions.

📆**Recommended Garlic Planting Dates**

For the best results, I recommend planting garlic on:

- **19–20 October**
- **29 October, after 8 am**

These dates follow the biodynamic planting approach.

🌱Enjoy your health journey in your home garden by growing one of the most healing plants using biodynamic methods.

🍂**Happy Autumn!**

Hans-Günther