

# SHALLOT

Gardening tips provided by  
Jefferson Farm & Gardens

## Overview

The shallot, *Allium cepa* var. *aggregatum*, is a cool season vegetable of the onion family and is related to onions, garlic, and leeks. It has a milder flavor than an onion and once peeled, looks like garlic because it has multiple bulbs. In some areas of the United States, especially Louisiana, the shallot is often referred to as a scallion even though scallions are a different species. This could be attributed to the early French settlers who probably had to substitute scallions for shallots in recipes, thus spreading the confusion.

## Choosing Varieties

There are a few varieties of shallots available that differ in days until maturity, color, and bulb size, as well as other traits. A few available varieties are:

- Gray Shallot (considered true shallot in France)
- Dutch Yellow Shallot (strong flavor, stores well)
- French Red Shallot (productive, spicy flavor)

It is recommended to try a few varieties to determine overall plant performance and personal preference.

## Planting Tips

The shallot is a cool season vegetable that can tolerate a freeze and can be spring or fall planted.

For best results, plant shallot sets, which are bulbs from a shallot grown the previous year. In Missouri, shallot sets can be planted as soon as the soil can be worked in the spring for late summer harvest or in late September for harvest the following spring/summer. Sets should be planted about 2 inches deep with the pointed end up. They should be planted 3-4 inches apart in rows that are about 1 foot apart. Raised beds or rows may help improve drainage.

## Soil Fertility and Pest Control

Shallot bulbs should be planted in well-drained soils and would benefit from the addition of nutrients either in the form of a complete fertilizer or aged compost. The soil should be loose and crumbly to allow the bulbs to form properly.

Shallot bulbs should receive enough water to keep them



from wilting without waterlogging the soil.

Shallot plants are non-competitive and should be kept free of weeds. Onion thrips have been known to attack foliage and leave light-colored blotches on leaves. Insecticidal soaps can be used to control thrips (be sure to follow product labels).

To prevent neck and root rot, be sure to rotate members of the onion family with other crops each year.

## Harvesting

Shallots can be harvested as green shallots when they are about 8 inches tall, or they can be left and harvested for dry bulbs. For dry bulbs, shallots can be dug when the tops have turned brown and fallen over. Bulbs should be cured by placing them on a screen (for air circulation) and sheltered from rain and direct sun until the skins are dry, about 3 weeks. Bulbs should not be washed or peeled before storing in a cool dry place. Bulbs can be used to plant a new crop the following year.

## Seed Sources

Shallot sets can be purchased from local garden centers. Sets can also be ordered from mail order companies via phone or website. Territorial Seed Company (1-800-626-0866, territorialseed.com) and John Scheepers (1-800-567-6086, kitchengardenseeds.com) are two companies that sell shallot varieties.

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