

Braidwood Garlic Growers Co-op Ltd – Localised Guide to Curing/Drying Garlic October 2018

→ Locality Process ↓	Bungonia (D Armstrong)	Bywong (C Fowler)	Deua Valley (C Kindrachuk)	Jembaicumbene (G Bonin)	Manar (G Byrnes)
Clean	North westerlies bring dry air If selling pre-Christmas, otherwise waits until filling a sales order	Westerlies predominate with dry air Generally does very little 'cleaning'; usually just hand brushes roots	Dry air moves up the valley system Within 24 hours strips outer leaf/leaves Seed bulbs are not cleaned	Monga mist brings some moisture Yes, within 2-3 days of harvest	Easterly sea breeze brings a lot of evening moisture Yes, strip off one green leaf at harvest
Roots	Trims if selling pre-Christmas, otherwise waits until filling a sales order	Shortens roots at harvest and will trim to 1cm for storage. Trimmed further after drying.	Removes using secateurs and does a final clean up with a knife	Removes roots at the basal plate with a knife within 2-3 days of harvest	Use a knife and cut off at basal plate (don't damage the basal plate) straight after harvesting
Cut Stalks/Leaves	If selling pre-Christmas, otherwise waits until filling a sales order (doesn't plait)	Trims leaves to 200mm long before hanging (but doesn't plait). Further trims to "3 fingers long" after drying.	No (bulbs are plaited)	No (bulbs are plaited)	No (bulbs are plaited)
Lay Flat		Inside, spreads garlic in a single layer on bed frames; frames are stacked three high	On wire beds until initial clean up and sorting is done; then lays 4-5 bulbs high on "Trimdeck" that is elevated at 3.6m	On chicken wire stretched over bed bases; 4-5 bulbs high (but you must move the garlic around to avoid rot)	Lays out on a farm gate until finished cleaning the amount harvested that day, then hangs
Hang	In bunches of 10 on a rack system by straddling over rungs where rungs are 750mm apart	Outside in bunches of 3-4 bulbs spaced 300mm apart on rungs that are 250mm apart	Seed bulbs are hung in bunches of 25 (uncleaned except for roots)		Grade into sizes and hang in bunches of 20 (but this year will do bunches of 10 to dry faster)
Curing Time	4-6 weeks (but always leaves garlic hanging through January)	4-6 weeks	3-4 weeks	When you feel it's dry enough	4-6 weeks Turban 6-8 weeks Creole 7-9 weeks Purple Stripes
Air Circulation	Uses a north facing shed that has good air circulation	Uses a fan inside and outside to improve air flow	The Valley provides good air flow. Will use blow heaters if required for warmth and better air flow	Uses a demountable poly tunnel covered with black plastic orientated east/west for good air movement	North facing shed 3-4m high for good updraft and warmth
Warmth	North facing shed provides warmth	North facing shed provides warmth	Uses a north facing shed, open on 3 sides. Will use blow heaters for warmth and better air flow if needed	If it's cold and wet, use a heater	North facing shed and height provides warmth
Storage	Tries to avoid storing by selling stock; otherwise, makes sure garlic is very dry	Inverts bulbs on mesh racks.	In onion bags in an internal storage area (away from rats)	Sell early to minimise storage space and the risk of something going wrong. If you must store, have very good air circulation	Hang until sold or, cut stalks to 5cm and put in bread crates stacked alternately full and empty and placed up high on gates

Curing times for different garlic groups (Letitia Ware, 2015)

Different garlic groups take different times to cure depending on their bulb size, structure, number of cloves and thickness of bulb skins.

- Turban 4-6 weeks
- Asiatic 4-5 weeks
- Creole 5-7 weeks
- Artichoke 8-12 weeks
- Standard Purple Stripe 7-9 weeks
- Marbled Purple Stripe 6-8 weeks
- Glazed Purple Stripe 6-8 weeks
- Rocambole 6-8 weeks
- Porcelain 6-8 weeks
- Silverskin 4-6 weeks

As always, curing times depend on your curing conditions – heat, convective air and relative humidity; and whether you are curing passively or doing forced curing e.g. in bins with heaters, fans, dehumidifiers etc.

Garlic that is sold or shipped before it has fully cured risks developing mould during transport or becoming soft, leading to customers having problems.

You will know that a bulb is cured sufficiently for sale when:

1. The outer bulb skins are dry and crinkle and are easily removed when rubbed with your hand.
2. The bulb skin beneath the removed top layer is also dry to the touch. It will not come off as easily as the top skin but still feels dry.
3. The inside of the bulb, when opened, feels dry and has no noticeable moisture between the cloves at the centre.
4. The cloves easily crack off the basal plate and the basal plate feels dry.
5. The clove skins feel dry and when you peel a clove the skin is brittle and does not feel moist or wet.