

PLAITING GARLIC & ONIONS



1. Freshly harvested garlic needs to wilt for a few days to make it flexible for braiding. Before plaiting, the roots should be cut off, being careful not to remove the hardened root base. Gently remove the outer layers of the wrapper, just enough to get rid of the dirt. A thick, dry wrapper will help to protect the bulb during months of storage.

2. Begin the plait by making an X with two bulbs.

3. Fold the top stem over the bottom one. Bring the folded stem up through the middle. You are using the same motion as when you begin tying your shoelaces.

4. Add a third bulb by placing it in the middle with its stem on top of the first two crossed stems.

5. Next bring the stem from the right to the middle, while keeping everything tight.



6. Now bring the stem on the left to the middle, keeping everything tight. At this point, you may or may not be ready to add more bulbs into the braid, depending on the sizes of the bulbs and stems. If the bulbs are large or the stems are skinny, you may need to cross the right over the middle, and left over the middle one or more time before adding the next bulbs.



7. Add bulbs into the braid one at a time. After crossing from left to middle, lay the new stem parallel to the existing middle stem (the new bulb is on the left side).



8. Now cross the right stem over the two middle stems. Now the two stems are on the right and there are single stems in the middle and on the left.



9. Next add a second stem parallel to the middle stem (the new bulb is on the right side).



10. Now cross the left stem over the two middle stems. At this point there are two stems on the left, two on the right, and one in the middle.



11. Lay the third new stem in the middle (its bulb will also be in the middle). Continue plaiting by crossing right over middle and left over middle, keeping the parallel stems together and adding new bulbs into the plait in the same way.



12. After the final bulbs have been added, continue the plait for a few inches to ensure that they are well secured. To knot it, bring one end of a looped string behind the braid, and

push the other end through. Pull it tight. The string holds the braid together, and is the hanger. Hang the braid for a couple of weeks in a warm, low-light location with good air circulation until the stems are well dried.

On the Winter Solstice community members planted garlic and onions. On the Summer Solstice, these will be harvested. We hope that this becomes a tradition within the community - a way to celebrate the longest and shortest day of the year, giving thanks to the sun and the earth for nourishing the garlic and onions and nourishing the community.

Dwellbeing Shieldfield is a community benefit society and cooperative of Shieldfield community members of all ages and backgrounds. Get in touch to find out more:

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