



School Gardening
Resources

PRIMARY LEVEL

BORD BIA
IRISH FOOD BOARD

Growing Onions, Garlic & Chives In School





Time of Year	October, March and April
Aim	To demonstrate to children how to grow vegetables in the allium group.
Resources Needed	Organic onion sets, garlic bulbs, spring onion and chive seeds, sowing line, well-rotted manure, garden compost or vegetable compost, window boxes, modular trays, 15cm diameter pot. Note: Some onion sets, and garlic bulbs are winter hardy and these should be planted in autumn.
Cross Curriculum Relevance	SESE: Living things, exploring / research, recording, observing Maths: Measuring, recording, active learning Literacy: New words, writing, spelling Art: Making signs, photos Informal Curriculum: Food Dudes, Healthy Eating, Discover Primary Science



1 Autumn Planting of Onion Sets

Grow winter hardy onion sets such as Troy, Shakespeare or Electric (red) in a well-prepared bed into which well-rotted garden compost has been added. Examine each set and discard those that are soft or sprouting. Half immerse each set in the soil and plant 10cm apart with 25-30cm between rows. They can be grown in a window box too. Or grow in modular trays filled with peat-free compost and plant in beds or window boxes in March. Inspect daily to see if birds are pulling up the sets. Harvest overwintered ones in June.



2 Autumn Sowing of Garlic

Grow garlic such as Solent Wight, Provence Wight or Elephant Garlic in well-composted beds 20 cm apart with 30 cm between rows. Push bulbs into soil to twice their depth. Harvest in June. They can also be grown in modular trays and planted in beds in March. If no beds are available plant in window boxes which are 20cm wide and 20cm deep. Break the bulbs up carefully into cloves discarding small ones or soft ones. Sow the cloves 10cm apart into peat-free compost to which has been added a couple of handfuls of grit for good drainage and the holes at the bottom covered with pebbles or grit. Keep the tips about 2.5cm below the surface of the mixture. Leave the boxes outside in a sunny spot.



3 Growing Spring Onions or Scallions

Sow a variety such as Ishikura Bunching or Parade 1.5cm deep in a six celled modular tray in the classroom in March. Fill the modules with peat-free compost and sow ten seeds per module. When the seeds have germinated move them outside to a sunny place. Plant in bunches about 5 weeks later, 25cm apart into a raised bed or a window box. Well-rotted compost or manure added to the bed in autumn would be beneficial. Harvest after another 5 weeks. Sow another modular tray about three weeks after sowing the first one and another three weeks after that.



4 Spring Chives

Sow thinly in a 15cm pot of peat free compost in April, watering the compost before sowing. Cover the pot with clear plastic. Leave this on a sunny windowsill. They will germinate after about 14 days. Maintain moisture in the pot. Keep the pot in the classroom and harden them off outside for about a week before moving the pot outdoors in May. Harvest the shoots when they are about 15cm tall.



Health and Safety

★ Wash hands after sowing.



Planting of onion sets and garlic cloves in March/April is similar to autumn planting.

