

# Arranhill Garlic Farm

Al Cowan was raised on a small farm in the County of Donegal in Northern Ireland. He attended Gurteen Agricultural College in Tipperary and came to Canada in 1974. He and his wife Wendy Wilford moved to their farm near Allenford in 1985. Two acres of garlic are cultivated on the farm and a quarter acre of shallots. Eighty percent of Al's crop is sold as planting stock and he receives orders by mail from all over the country. Both shallots and garlic are sold at the farm gate (open 7 days a week) and at the Perth and Stratford garlic festivals ([www.perthgarlicfestival.com](http://www.perthgarlicfestival.com) and [www.stratfordgarlicfestival.com](http://www.stratfordgarlicfestival.com)).



Al at Perth Garlic Festival

Grey Bruce is well suited for growing garlic because of the snow cover which prevents the ground from freezing. Al explains that because the roots can develop throughout the winter the plant gets a head start and will be up out of the ground with the early spring crocuses. For good results with garlic, Al offers the following advice:

- Plant the cloves in the fall (October)
- Remove the scapes (flower pods) at the end of June to ensure that plant's energy goes into the root and not the flower
- Harvest in late July when the bottom three leaves are brown
- Store in a well ventilated location where both temperate and relative humidity are consistent

One of the secrets to Al's farming success can be attributed to his marketing strategy which he sums up in a few words, "don't grow it until you know you've sold it". He is treasurer of the Garlic Growers Association of Ontario ([www.garlicgrowers.on.ca](http://www.garlicgrowers.on.ca)) which provides growers with support and administers research projects such as the Clean Seed Program.

Arranhill Garlic Farm garlic is available at...

Southampton Meat Market  
Harrigan's Red & White (Southampton)  
Maple Lane Orchards (Tara)  
Grassroots Organics (Desboro)  
Around the Sound (Owen Sound)

**Arranhill Garlic Farm • R.R. 2 (#110)  
Allendorf • Open 7 days a week  
Orders available by phone or email •  
519-934-2119 • [acowan@bmts.com](mailto:acowan@bmts.com)**

*Written by Jennifer Pittet for Grey Bruce Agriculture  
& Culinary Association •  
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