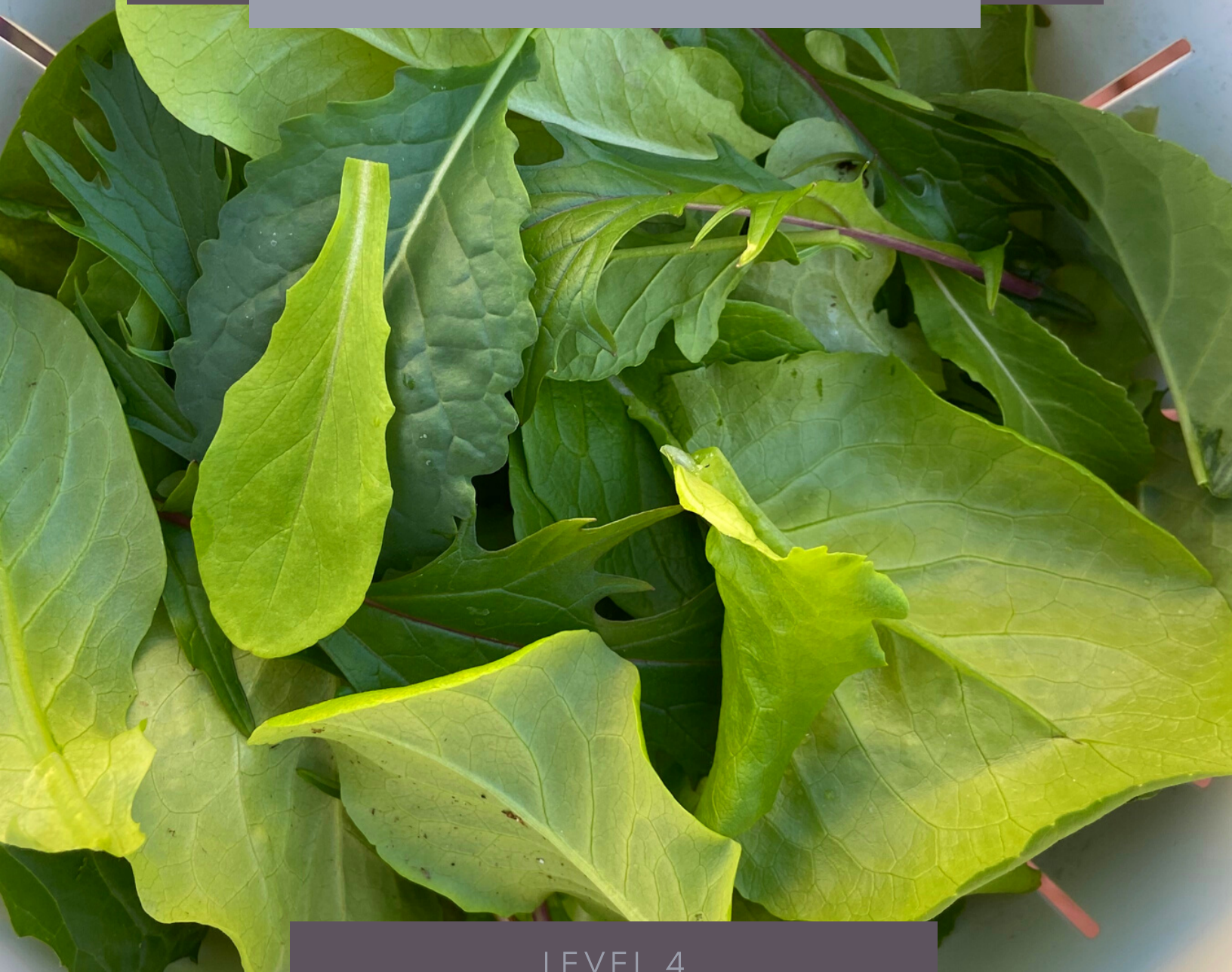


BLOSSOM & ROOT

NATURE STUDY // LEVEL 4

A Garden of My Own

LESSON GUIDE



LEVEL 4

A Year of Gardening Projects and Prompts



www.blossomandroot.com

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Nature Study
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**Blossom & Root Nature Study
Level 4: A Garden of My Own**

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Contents

Important Note: Lessons and corresponding projects can be done in any order. Start in your current season, and move through the lessons and projects as quickly or as slowly as you like. Some projects will only take a few minutes to complete, while others will continue for many months. You do not have to complete every project. Remember, this guide is here to work for you--you do not work for it.

Lessons for Fall

- **Month 1: In the Autumn Garden**

Start a Bulb Garden | Plant Garlic | Plant Green Manure | Autumn Tuck-In Tasks

- **Month 2: The Autumn Garden Lab**

The Edible Parts of a Plant | Visit to a Farm or Garden | Saving Seeds | Autumn Tastes Lab

- **Month 3: The Garden Ecosystem**

The Dirt on Soil | Micro-Friends | Delightful Decomposers | 10 Questions Game

Lessons for Winter

- **Month 1: Winter Worm Bin Project**

Anatomy of a Worm | Life Cycle of a Worm | Building the Worm Bin | Observations with Light

- **Month 2: The Winter Garden Lab**

Exploring Soil Drainage | Soil Testing Lab | Compost Basics | Winter Tastes Lab

- **Month 3: In the Winter Garden**

Planning Your Garden | Plants to Consider | Ordering Seeds | Start a Late-Winter Greens Patch

Lessons for Spring

- **Month 1: The Spring Garden Lab**

Microgreens | Make a Timing Chart | Starting Seeds | Spring Tastes Lab

- **Month 2: Understanding Garden Plants**

Annuals, Perennials, and Biennials | Heirlooms | Plant Friends and Foes | Plant Profiles in Your Log

- **Month 3: In the Spring Garden**

Clever Containers | Preparing Soil | Spring Sowing and Transplanting | Start a Compost Bin

Lessons for Summer

- **Month 1: In the Summer Garden**

Managing Water | Managing Heat and Light | Managing Nutrients | How to Keep Things Blooming

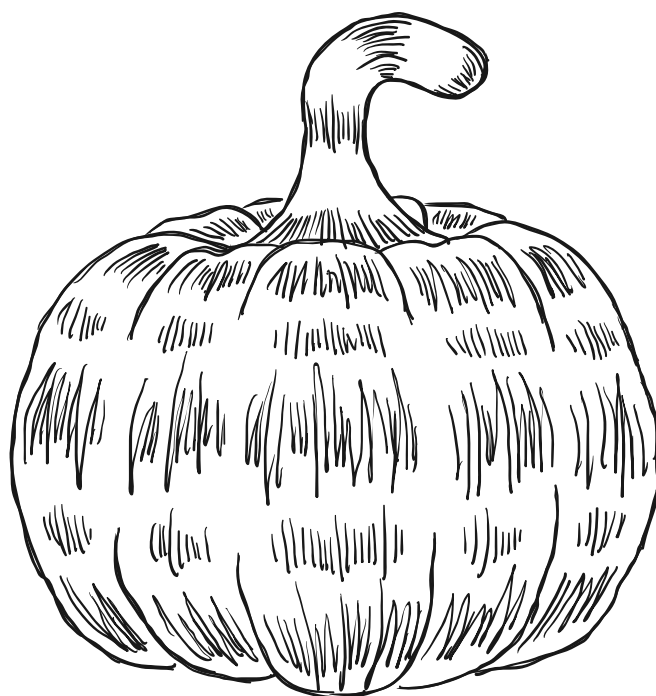
- **Month 2: The Summer Garden Lab**

Mighty Mulch | The Truth About Weeds | Supports and Trellises | Summer Tastes Lab

- **Month 3: Garden Pals and Pests**

Pollinators | Beneficial Birds | Garden Predators | Working Smarter, Not Harder

Lessons for Fall



Plant Garlic

About the Project:

Garlic is such a fun crop to plant in the fall. It's easy to grow, and you can either plant it into a pot or directly into the ground. Be sure to find an organic head of garlic. Non-organic garlic may not sprout.

If your garlic is pretty fresh, you can skip step two and plant it right away. If it's dried out and old, you should complete step two and rehydrate it first.

Step 1:

Loosen the papery bulb wrapping around the full head of garlic with your fingernails, and gently peel the bulbs apart. Be sure not to pull off the thinner papery wrapping around the individual bulbs--you want those to stay on. Choose the healthiest, largest bulbs and set aside the smaller ones to cook with later.

Step 2:

Put the bulbs into a cup with the pointy side facing up and the flat (bulb-bottom) side facing down. Add a very small amount of water to the cup, so that it comes up to about 1/3 of the height of the bulbs. When the bulbs are all packed in together, they'll help each other stay upright. Leave it in a room with some light, but not in direct sun, for a few days. The garlic will begin to sprout green tops. Time for step three!

Step 3:

If you're planting into a pot or container, make sure it has good drainage holes already. Fill the container with a good potting mix, pushing the mix down into the pot firmly as you fill it.

Fall: The Autumn Garden Lab

Project Timing:

In locations with a cold winter, this project is best done in early fall, while the soil and daytime temperatures are still relatively warm. (See note below if you do not live where it gets cold in the winter, or where you do not have a true winter.)

Supplies You Will Need:

- a head of organic garlic from the grocery store, farmer's market, your favorite seed catalog, or your local nursery
- if planting in a pot: a small pot or up-cycled container (see beginning of guide) with drainage holes punctured into it; potting soil
- if planting outdoors: an area of loosened soil, with some compost worked into it first

No Winter? Treat it Like a Science

Experiment!:

Like many bulbs, garlic requires vernalization to produce well. Vernalization happens during prolonged exposure to colder temperatures. Without this cold spell, garlic will not form proper bulbs. You can try to "trick" the garlic by planting it in a small pot and tucking it into a cold place (like the back of your refrigerator) for a few months. Be sure to get permission from a parent first!

Plant Garlic

Step 3, cont.:

Fall: The Autumn Garden Lab

If you're planting directly into the ground, loosen the soil up a bit with a trowel or a hand-cultivator (hand rake) tool, and work in a bit of compost.

Step 4:

Plant the garlic pointy-side up, about 1 - 2 inches deep. Make sure to space the bulbs 4 - 6 inches apart. Cover with soil, and water well. You'll want to keep the soil moist, but not damp. If planting outdoors, cover with a layer of mulch (straw, chopped leaves or grass clippings work well) about 2 - 4 inches thick.

Don't forget! Garlic might sprout after a warm fall day, or it might be sprouted when you plant it, if you did step 2. Don't worry--these sprouts won't be harmed by most winter conditions, and they may even turn a little brown on the tips. This is completely normal.

Step 5:

If you planted the bulbs into a pot, place the pot outside (or in the back of the refrigerator.) You'll likely need to water about once a week, but this will vary depending on where you live.

If you planted them into the ground, check it once a week by pushing aside the mulch and sticking one of your fingers a few inches down into the soil. It should feel moist but not wet. Water as needed, and always put the mulch back on top.

Step 6:

Your cloves should emerge in early spring. Once about half of the leaves turn brownish yellow and die off, you can harvest the garlic. (This will usually happen in July.) Carefully remove the garlic from underneath, using your hand or a trowel. Don't pull on the tops, and be careful not to damage the bulb. Immediately bring it to a shady area--don't leave it in the sun. Hang it up in full shade for 4 - 6 weeks. After that, it's ready to enjoy! (Be sure to save some bulbs for the next crop!)