

**MORE CHOICE, PLEASE!**  
Are Two Parties Enough Today?

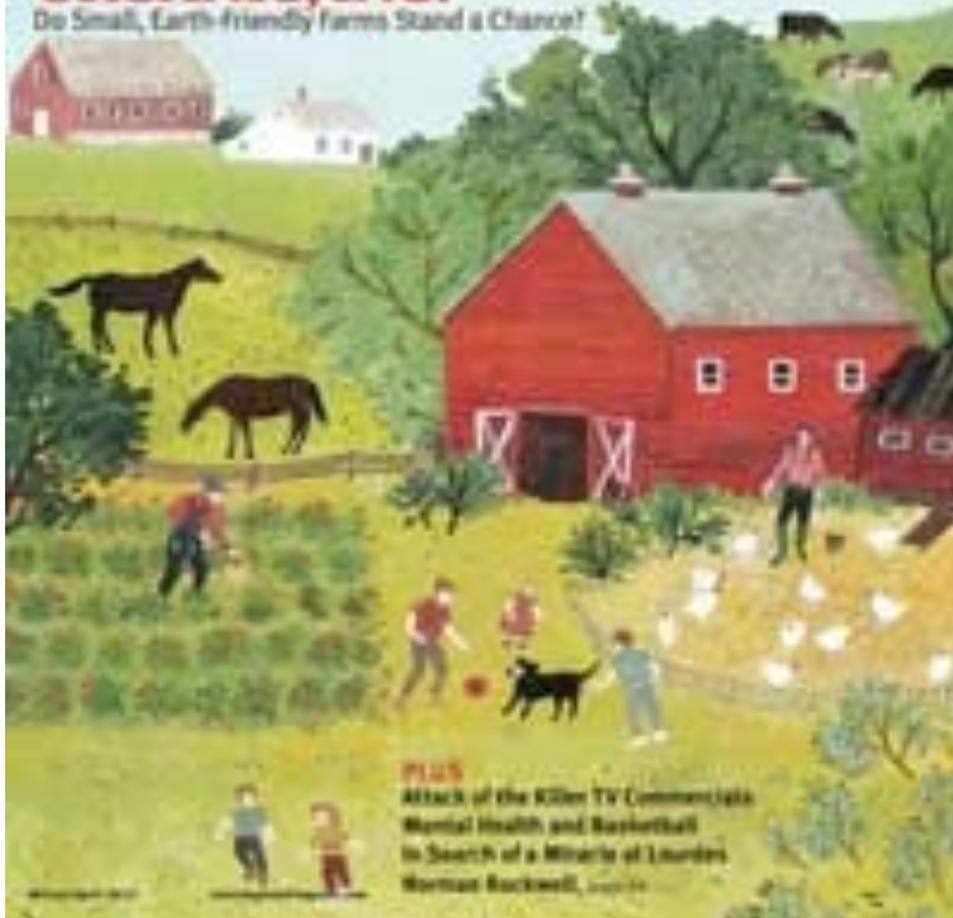
**SPRING CLEANING SPECIAL**  
Conquer Clutter Now!

**'I CAN WALK AGAIN!'**  
Amazing Medical Advances

# **THE SATURDAY EVENING POST**

**ORGANIC, INC.**

Do Small, Earth-Friendly Farms Stand a Chance?



**PLUS**  
Attack of the Killer TV Commercials  
Mental Health and Basketball  
In Search of a Miracle at Lourdes  
Norman Rockwell, 1911-1988

# Bulb of *Benevolence*

*Throughout antiquity, garlic has been heralded for its curative powers. Today, modern medicine, too, is saluting this smelly but salubrious bulb.*

BY DEBORAH HUFFORD

**L**ong ago, garlic was believed to repel vampires. Today, researchers from the National Cancer Institute and other medical communities believe that garlic may indeed be a powerful talisman, but against modern-day demons—cancer and heart disease.

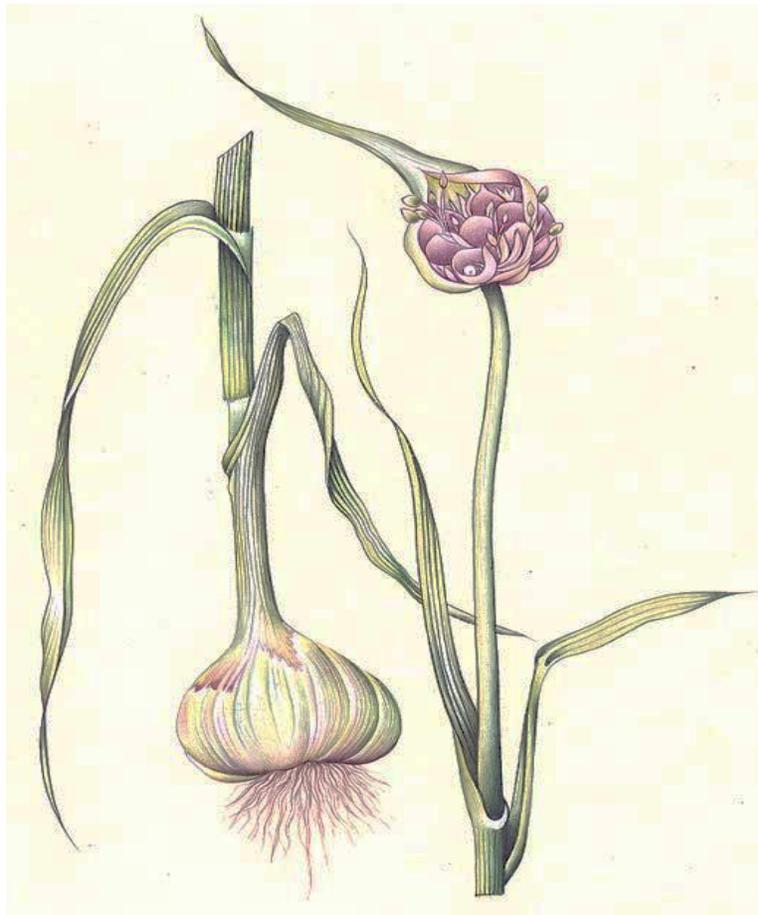
For thousands of years, garlic's magical aura of healing was as illustrious as its smell was malodorous. Venerable ancients extolled its virtues, claiming it to be everything from an aphrodisiac for humans to an antidote for horses' nightmares. The Egyptians fed garlic to pyramid-building slaves to build their stamina, and Alexander the Great fed garlic to his legions to increase their valor in battle. Hippocrates declared its less glamorous benefits as a laxative. Aristotle recommended it for rabies. Pliny the Elder prescribed it for 62 ailments, including hemorrhoids and snakesbites. Muhammad applied it to scorpion bites. In the Middle Ages, a garlic garland worn around the neck was protection against the plague.

More recently, it was rubbed on racehorses' bits to prevent competitors from passing. And Swedish farmers tied cloves of garlic around cows' necks to prevent trolls from stealing milk at night. Today, bullfighters still wear garlic around their necks as protection against the horns of bulls.



Modernity's claims of garlic's extraordinary properties are as dramatic as those of ancient lore. Recently, the National Cancer Institute declared that a diet rich in garlic and other allium vegetables can help prevent stomach cancer. Other studies have revealed garlic as an antidote for high cholesterol and high blood pressure, a retardant of blood clotting, a powerful antibiotic, an activator of our own natural immune systems, and a possible treatment for other cancers.

Researchers have found that the very essence of garlic's healing power is in its smelly sulfur compounds. Garlic, along with onions, leeks, chives, and scallions, is a member of the plant genus *Allium* and is rich in volatile, biologically active sulfur compounds proving to be efficacious fighters in the war against modern-day killers.



*Recently, the National Cancer Institute declared that a diet rich in garlic and allium vegetables can help prevent stomach cancer. Other studies reveal garlic is an antidote for high cholesterol and blood pressure.*

A definitive study on garlic's cancer-fighting abilities, recently published in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, focused on the diets of stomach cancer patients and cancerfree subjects in Linqu, China. Researchers found that allium vegetables "can significantly reduce the risk of stomach cancer. Persons in Linqu tended to be exposed to mild doses of allium vegetables over long periods, often beginning in childhood.

Our study suggests that all or part of such exposure has resulted in a reduction in stomach cancer risk starting at an early age..... and continuing through life.”

Likewise, another study in China seems to support the institute’s findings. In Gangshan, China, each resident eats an average of several garlic cloves a day, and the rate of stomach cancer in that area is extremely low.

Garlic also shows promise of fighting heart disease in a variety of ways. Recent studies of a religious East Indian sect whose members eat extremely large amounts of garlic have shown that these persons exhibit very low levels of cholesterol and triglycerides, which clog the arteries. Furthermore, garlic raised the levels of “good” cholesterol. This type of cholesterol, called high-density lipoprotein, or HDL, reduces artery-clogging substances in the blood.

*A study at the State University of New York at Albany indicates that garlic produces a compound called “ajoene” that helps keep blood platelets from clotting, which may help prevent heart attacks and strokes.*



Another study, at the State University of New York at Albany, indicates that garlic produces a compound called “ajoene,” released when garlic is heated. Eric Block, a professor of chemistry at the university, says ajoene keeps blood platelets from clotting, which may indicate that garlic would be helpful in thinning the blood and preventing heart attacks and strokes. Garlic’s benevolence does not end there.

The bulb also contains the sulfur compound *allicin*, an antibiotic that Louis Pasteur discovered in 1858 could kill bacteria. Because of the bulb’s antiseptic qualities, garlic was used widely in World War II as a poultice for open wounds. Today, we know that, used in large amounts, garlic can kill 23 types of bacteria, including salmonella and staphylococcus, and 60 kinds of fungi and yeasts, among them *Candida albicans*, a cause of vaginitis. Garlic is also a source of vitamins A, B, and C, as well as selenium, which stimulates the body’s immune response.

Although some of garlic's medicinal powers remain mysterious, modern science is closer to unlocking its curatives secrets. Some questions remain unanswered: "Just how much garlic must a person eat to reap its healthful benefits?" or "What forms of garlic are most healthful?"



*Garlic is a great source of vitamins A, B and C, as well as selenium, which stimulates the body's immune system.*

Studies seem to indicate that the way garlic is prepared affects its healing properties. Some beneficial compounds are released when the garlic is crushed; others, when it is heated or cooked. As *The Official Garlic Lover's Handbook* states, "The more you do to it, the more it will do to you." When raw garlic is crushed, for example, an amino acid from one part of the clove combines with an enzyme from another part and produces allicin, which kills bacteria. Garlic gurus suggest that the bulb's healthful chemicals can be destroyed when deodorized or dried into garlic salt or powdered form.

Can you eat too much of a good thing? Most indications are that large amounts of garlic are harmless, although there have been cases of allergies, stomach disorders, and diarrhea in heavy users. Perhaps the biggest drawback is garlic's antisocial qualities, for which it was nicknamed "the stinking rose." Its pungency was once considered so infamous that it was believed to repel werewolves, warlocks, and sorcerers.

Despite the pungent smell, this humble little bulb is quickly redeeming itself as an effluvial elixir that holds promise of enriching our health as much as it has enriched our palate. In light of the new research into garlic's protective powers, the old folk adage, "An *apple* a day keeps the doctor away" may have to be revised.

---

## Healthy & Hearty Garlic Recipes



### **Garlic and Spinach Stuffed Chicken Breasts**

(Makes 4 servings)

- 2 T. unsalted butter
- 1/3 c. chopped green onion
- 3 medium garlic cloves, minced
- 1 (10-oz.) frozen spinach, thawed, drained and chopped
- 1/4 c. butter
- 1/2 c. flour
- 2 c. milk or cream
- 3/4 c. shredded Monterey Jack cheese
- 2 whole chicken breasts
- 1/4 t. pepper
- 1/2 t. salt
- 1/4 t. paprika

In two-quart saucepan over medium heat, sauté onion with garlic for two minutes or until slightly browned. Remove from heat. Stir in spinach.

Prepare roux, melting 1/4 c. butter in saucepan over low heat. Whisk in flour and cook, stirring constantly two minutes. Pour in milk or cream, stirring constantly until slightly thick. Add sautéed onions and garlic, spinach, cheese, and seasoning.

*Continued on page 92*