

Shallot—*Allium cepa* (Aggregatum group)¹

James M. Stephens²

Shallot is a vegetable very similar to the common onion. *Cibol* is the Spanish name for the plant. “Scallion” is used somewhat interchangeably with “shallot,” but the term “scallion” generally refers to any onion that is pulled young, before the bulb is formed.

Description

Shallot is a perennial that produces a cluster of small pointed bulbs from a single planted bulb. The hollow, rounded leaves are up to 24 inches long. Bulbs are $\frac{3}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter and are of varying color—red, pink, white, gray, or russet.

Shallots are grown mainly for use as a green onion, particularly in the South. Also, they may be grown for the dry bulbs, which are milder flavored than onions. While the shallot grows well in Florida, most of the US commercial production is centered in southern Louisiana.

Culture

Shallots are started by division rather than from seeds. The bulb cluster contains several small bulbs called cloves. Each bulb (clove) is surrounded by a thin leaf scale rather than the entire group of cloves being enclosed in a membrane, as is the case with garlic.

To plant shallots, first separate the clump of bulbs and then set them in the soil with the point of the cloves 3–5 inches apart in the row. As the daughter bulbs and plants develop, some soil should be pushed around them to blanch (whiten) the lower portion of the stems.



Figure 1. Shallots.
Credits: James M. Stephens, UF/IFAS

Use

Some of the US varieties acceptable for Florida gardeners are ‘Louisiana Pearl,’ ‘Bayou Pearl,’ and ‘Wilmington.’ Plant them from September through March. Time from planting until use is about 3 months. Shallots may be used fresh, in salads, or in cooking.

1. This document is HS666, one of a series of the Horticultural Sciences Department, UF/IFAS Extension. Original publication date May 1994. Revised September 2015. Reviewed October 2018. Visit the EDIS website at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.

2. James M. Stephens, professor emeritus, Horticultural Sciences Department; UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL 32611.