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Question:

Are onions, shallots, and garlic grown differently?

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Answer::

Onions, garlic, leeks, shallots and chives are all alliums. While they're not all grown exactly the same way, their cultural needs are similar. All are happiest in full sun, but they also tolerate partial shade and need similar soil conditions. The biggest difference is in the scheduling of each crop. Here are the basics on these savory crops: Chives. *Allium schoenoprasum*. Hardy in USDA Zones 3 to 9, chives produce clumps of thin edible leaves and edible flowers as well. This easy-to-grow perennial is most commonly grown in herb and flower gardens. Garlic. *Allium sativum*. Grown primarily for its edible bulbs, garlic also produces tasty leaves that can be chopped and used like chives. The best crops of garlic are planted in fall and harvested in

midsummer the following year. Plants are hardy from USDA Zones 2 to 10. Although garlic crops are typically harvested each year, they also can be left in the garden and grown as perennials as well. Leeks. *Allium ampeloprasum*, Porrum group. Another hardy onion-family plant, leeks can be grown in USDA Zones 2 to 10, although there are both hardy and nonhardy cultivars available. They're planted in spring and harvested the same season. Leeks are biennials. Onions. *Allium cepa*, Cepa group. Biennials that are grown as annuals, onions can be a bit confusing, since there are many different colors and kinds to choose from. They can be grown throughout North America, but planting times and cultivars vary depending on day length. They're generally planted in spring, although in warm climates they're grown as a winter crop. Harvest time varies depending on the size and type you are growing. Reprinted from *The Veggie Gardener's Answer Book* Copyright 2008 by Barbara W. Ellis, with permission from Storey Publishing.

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